# GARRY GRAYSON'S FOOTBALL RIVALS

Elmer A. Dawson

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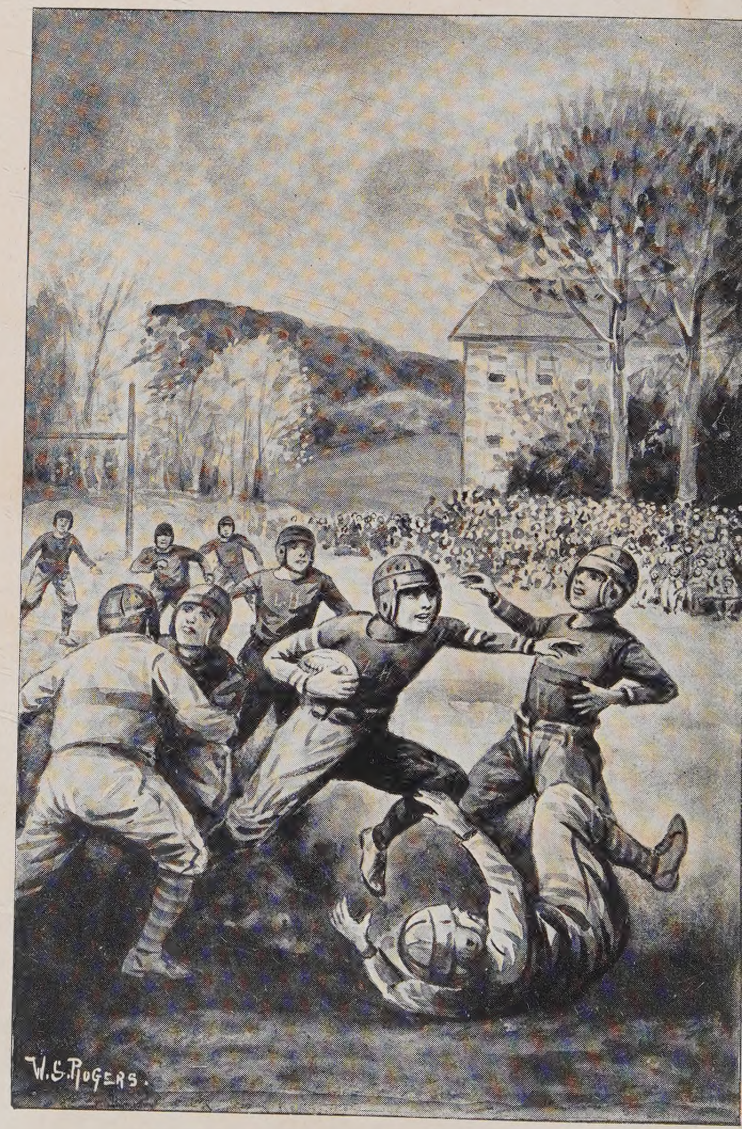


GARRY TUCKED THE BALL UNDER HIS ARM AND TORE THROUGH.

# GARRY GRAYSON'S FOOTBALL RIVALS

OR

## The Secret of the Stolen Signals

BY

ELMER A. DAWSON

AUTHOR OF "GARRY GRAYSON'S HILL STREET ELEVEN,"
"GARRY GRAYSON SHOWING HIS SPEED,"
ETC.

*ILLUSTRATED BY*

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# GARRY GRAYSON FOOTBALL STORIES

By ELMER A. DAWSON

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GARRY GRAYSON'S HILL STREET ELEVEN
OR THE FOOTBALL BOYS OF LENOX

GARRY GRAYSON AT LENOX HIGH
OR THE CHAMPIONS OF THE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

GARRY GRAYSON'S FOOTBALL RIVALS
OR THE SECRET OF THE STOLEN SIGNALS

GARRY GRAYSON SHOWING HIS SPEED
OR A DARING RUN ON THE GRIDIRON

GARRY GRAYSON AT STANLEY PREP
OR THE FOOTBALL RIVALS OF RIVERVIEW

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# GARRY GRAYSON'S FOOTBALL RIVALS

## CHAPTER I

### Falling from the Skies

"It won't be long now, fellows, before we get a chance at the old football," exulted Garry Grayson as he and his companions made their way through the woods about two miles from Lenox, their home town.

"The season can't come too quickly to suit me," returned Rooster Long, as he avoided a spreading root that threatened to trip him. "Gee, my foot is fairly itching for the feel of the pigskin!"

"And now that we're no longer lowly freshmen, we may have a look in for the regular team," remarked Nick Danter.

"Here's hoping," put in big Bill Sherwood. "Of course, to be on the scrubs is better than nothing, but I'm good and tired of being the doormat for the first string fellows."

"I guess we all are," observed Ted Dillingham. "One thing is certain, anyway. They can't keep Garry off the regulars after the way he played in that game that won the championship for Lenox High. Gee, that was some football playing, I'll tell the world!"

"It isn't a cinch for anybody," declared Garry soberly. "But so many of the old stars graduated in June that there'll be a good many places to be filled. There's Dittler, for instance—"

"And that boy will certainly be missed!" exclaimed Nick Danter. "The whole backfield was built around him. When it came to bucking the line and skirting the ends, there wasn't a player in the High School League that could give him any points."

"Right you are," agreed Garry. "The boy was a wonder. Minter, too, was no slouch, and they don't come any better than Payne. Both of them are gone, and it will be mighty hard work to fill their shoes."

"But the biggest loss of all is Ralph Wynn," asserted Rooster Long. "Look at the way he ran the team. Used his brains every minute. Many's the game he's won by quick thinking. He had the beef, too, and the speed. It won't look like the same old team with the captain gone."

"It's a blow to the school and the team,"

Bill acquiesced. "But that's all in the game. The other schools will have lost some of their stars, too; so in the long run things will about even up."

"We've got one bit of luck, anyway, in having Mr. Phillips as our coach," put in Ted Dillingham.

"That's right," agreed Garry heartily. "At first it looked as though he were going to have hard work in filling Coach Garwin's place, but the way Mr. Phillips brought the team through to the championship showed that he was there with the goods."

"You said a mouthful that time," agreed Nick.

"Luck for Garry that old Shrugg did the disappearing act when he did," remarked Ted with a grin. "That English prof sure had it in for one fellow on the scrubs."

"And all because of a muddy football!" laughed Bill Sherwood, referring to an unfortunate occasion when Garry Grayson, quite by accident, had kicked a ball heavy with mud into the face of Trompet Shrugg, thereby ruffling that gentleman's temper as well as bespattering his immaculate waistcoat.

"Speaking of mud," put in Rooster, glancing skyward, "it sure looks as though we were going to have plenty of it before long. See that row of banked-up clouds?"

"Just wind clouds," scoffed Garry, giving Rooster a poke in the ribs with a four-foot branch he had picked up from the ground.

Rooster grabbed the end of it and a spirited tussle ensued. By the time Garry had succeeded in wresting the improvised weapon from his friend's grasp the sky was definitely overcast with heavy clouds. The prophecy of storm seemed about to be fulfilled.

"Never knew it to fail just when we'd planned to catch some fish and have a good time," grumbled Nick Danter, as he looked disconsolately at his fishing rod.

"Oh, stop your grouching," counseled Rooster. "We're close to the creek now and we'll have plenty of time to catch a mess before it rains. Those clouds may blow over. Anyway, we've got a better chance to make a catch on a cloudy day."

"Righto," asserted Garry. "I'm for the fish every time. A few drops of rain won't hurt us, anyhow."

"It may make the wood too wet to burn, though," observed Ted Dillingham. "And there's no fun catching fish if you can't cook them."

"I guess we can rake enough dry brush together for a fire," predicted Bill hopefully.

"You fellows are talking as though we had

a mess already," laughed Nick. "Perhaps we won't have a nibble."

"We won't, eh?" scoffed Ted. "Just watch me land 'em! Say, who's got that can of worms?"

Rooster Long produced that highly necessary adjunct to a fishing excursion, and the boys hastened their steps down the narrow woods path that led to the stream.

It was by no means their first visit to the spot. The creek was an inlet to Bass Lake and abounded in fish that had many times had their numbers depleted by the young fishermen.

"The fellows that don't catch any will have to build the fire," pronounced Garry Grayson, as he got his tackle ready. "Is that a go?"

"Seems like rubbing it in," returned Rooster, grinning. "But you can't bluff me. Bet I land the first one."

"And I'll get the biggest one," predicted Ted.

"Brag's a good dog, but Holdfast's a better," remarked Bill Sherwood, with a superior air, as he baited his hook.

Nick said nothing, but his line hit the water first and was grabbed almost immediately by a hungry perch that the boy landed in fine style.

"I'll let the fish do my talking for me," and he grinned tantalizingly as he displayed his catch.

"If it can talk more like a fish than you do, it's pretty good," Rooster came back at him.

A few minutes later Garry landed a still bigger perch. Then Ted caught a catfish and Bill captured a bass. Other fish were captured from time to time, but luck constantly eluded Rooster Long, though several times he sought what he thought might be better positions for his purpose.

At the end of twenty minutes Garry counted their catch.

"Nine in all," he announced. "That's more than we can eat, and I'm as hungry as a wolf. Rooster's the goat. Come, varlet," he commanded, addressing that youth, "rustle us some brushwood and make a fire for your betters."

Rooster picked up a fish and threw it at him, but Garry dodged and the fish caught Ted Dillingham square in the mouth.

"Say!" sputtered that young lad indignantly, as he used his handkerchief vigorously, "why don't you hit what you aim at? Are you cross-eyed? Think I want my fish raw?"

"There, there, Ted," said Garry soothingly, "you ought to be glad to suffer for a friend. Think of how much worse you'd have felt if it had hit me."

"Not on your life I wouldn't!" grumbled

Ted, still plying his handkerchief. "I'll smell that fish all day."

"I don't see why," remarked Bill innocently. "It's perfectly fresh."

"Not half as fresh as some fellows I know," retorted Ted, as he looked about for something to throw at his tormentors.

But they laughingly scurried out of reach and then turned to cleaning the fish. By the time Rooster had the fire going, the fish were ready, and soon the delicious aroma whetted still further the young appetites that needed no sharpening.

They had brought cocoa with them in two milk bottles and this they heated in an old saucepan that Garry Grayson's mother had loaned to them for such occasions. There were plenty of sandwiches, besides buttered rolls and jam. The feast was one fit for a king, the boys thought, as they munched fish and rolls and drank cocoa out of tin cups.

"This is the life!" sighed Rooster Long contentedly. "And this fish," with another huge bite, "sure is the berries."

"Keep still a minute!" cried Bill Sherwood. "What's that?"

Complete silence fell upon the group, broken only by the crackling of the fire. Then through the quiet came a humming sound like the whirring of a powerful motor.

"It's either a car burning up the road—" began Ted.

"Or an airplane," finished Garry. "Sounds more like one of those birds to me."

"It's an airplane, all right," declared Bill. "And it sounds as though it were right overhead."

The whir of the motor grew to a roar, and the boys, starting to their feet and staring up through the trees, saw the great man-made bird sweep nearly overhead, coming for a moment between them and the lowering sky.

As they watched, the plane appeared to waver, then make a dart downward.

The boys cried out in alarm.

But in a moment the pilot seemed to have recovered control, and the great machine winged its way upward, engine once more purring rhythmically.

"That guy's got engine trouble, all right," declared Nick Danter, with a shake of his head.

"I'd sure hate to take a dip like that," remarked Rooster, filling his tin cup again. "Apt to scramble your brains—"

"Providing you have any," grinned Garry. "Say, listen, old boy, sling over another of those rolls, will you?"

Rooster obeyed, then turned to Bill Sherwood.

"I've been meaning to ask you, Bill," he said, "how Frank was getting along."

"Fine," replied Bill, his face beaming. "Guess the old boy has learned his lesson. Buckling down to his work like a dog at a bone. And home—" He paused, and then added with a grin: "Is once more home. Frank sure did upset us all for a while."

"There's another fellow who should have learned his lesson too," put in Ted, his brows knitting into a scowl. "And that's Sandy Podder."

"Not a bit of it!" declared Nick. "You'd have a hard time knocking anything into that guy's thick skull. He was scared for a while, of course, at the close squeak he had in that Gyp Mooney robbery; but now he's getting into his stride again. I hear all sorts of things about his goings on. He's got it in for you too, Garry, good and plenty—don't make any mistake about that."

Garry Grayson shrugged.

"I'm not lying awake worrying about it, you bet," he rejoined carelessly.

"Just the same, what Nick says is right," said Bill, poking at the fire with a long stick. "It was your father, Garry, who showed him up in that last rough stuff he tried to pull, and you yourself got the information from Jerry Cox that put him on the fritz. Sandy Podder

isn't the fellow to forget anything like that. Take it from me, he'll get even if he can."

"Well, let him try it," said Garry cheerfully. "We've outwitted that rascal several times already, and I guess we can again, if we have to. But say, fellows, here comes the rain."

A splash fell on the embers of their fire, followed by another and yet another.

The boys jumped to their feet, hastily gathering up the remnants of their feast, their rods, and can of bait.

"Guess we'll have to run for it," conjectured Rooster. "From the look of the sky it'll soon be coming down in bucketfuls."

"How about Peeble's cabin?" Nick suggested, referring to a tumbledown hut in the woods whose former owner had long since passed into the great beyond, leaving his earthly habitat to the mercy of wind and storm.

Poor as it was, it would yet afford some shelter from the rain, and, as soon as they had looked to the remnants of their fire, the boys turned their steps toward it.

They had barely reached it and slammed the rickety door to behind them when the storm broke in fury, dashing upon the leaky roof and beating at the dirty, cracked windows.

Through the largest hole in the roof, the rain

was beginning to drip in an ever-increasing stream.

"Hey, there's a shower bath for you, Garry!" cried Rooster, and held his chum beneath the trickle.

Garry dodged the unwelcome shower and in retaliation grabbed Rooster and held him beneath the stream, which coursed chillingly down the hapless Rooster's back.

Rooster howled, and with a convulsive effort freed himself from Garry's grasp, at the same time butting his head against the ribs of his adversary.

In the laughing scrimmage, both boys went down and rolled over and over on the rotting floor of the cabin, to the huge delight of their chums.

"Soak him, Garry!"

"Attaboy, Rooster!"

"Go to, you fel—"

The words were interrupted by a rending crash, and the next moment it seemed as though the universe had come down about their ears!

## CHAPTER II

### A Close Call

Borne down to the floor, blinded, dazed, the boys lay half buried beneath the wreckage, the rain beating down upon them, soaking them through and through.

What had happened? What was it that had come crashing down upon them from the sky, bringing destruction in its wake?

This question Garry Grayson asked himself confusedly as he rubbed his bruised head and tried painfully to extricate himself from the mass of wreckage.

He pulled one leg from beneath some boards and found with relief that he could move it. Encouraged by the test, he tried the other one.

"Nothing broken," he muttered. Then, his head clearing, he looked around him fearfully for his companions.

Rooster and Nick were emerging slowly, bewilderedly, from a pile of wreckage. Bill was sitting on the floor, head buried in his arms, so dazed that he did not know what was going on around him.

All this Garry took in at a glance. And he saw also what it was that had crashed down upon them from the sky, almost completely demolishing Peeble's little cabin.

For an airplane, or what remained of one, was perched upon the wreckage, its damaged wings half supported by the tough, bending boughs of trees on either side of the ruined hut.

Garry looked about him for the pilot, and saw at some distance a pitiful, huddled figure that showed no signs of life.

He staggered to his feet and was about to go to the aid of the unfortunate fellow when a horrible thought stopped him.

Rooster and Nick were safe. Bill was rubbing his head as though his addled brains were getting ready to function again.

But Ted Dillingham! Where was Ted?

He was nowhere in sight. Garry rushed forward to a place where the timbers lay thickest, imagining Ted crushed, mangled, perhaps dead. Even as he did so, there came an explosion, and a darting, red flame shot out beneath the battered body of the airplane.

Fire! And somewhere beneath the wreckage lay Ted at the mercy of the flames!

Garry yelled hoarsely to his befuddled companions.

"Ted is under there somewhere!" he cried.

"Come on, boys! Work fast! We've got to get him out!"

His chums' heads cleared like magic, and the boys worked with feverish haste while the fire crept ever closer. They called Ted's name over and over again as they tore at the rough boards, searching for him.

At last came a faint answer, and their efforts were redoubled. At last they found Ted, pinned helplessly beneath a pile of boards, only his head visible!

"Hurry, fellows, hurry!" cried Garry in agony. "Quick, before the fire gets at him!"

Garry Grayson, now fourteen years old, had been born and brought up in Lenox, a thriving town with a population of about fifteen thousand. His father was Joseph S. Grayson, a prominent lawyer of the town and a leader in all its civic activities. Mrs. Grayson was a sweet, wholesome woman, intensely proud of her son Garry and his twin sister, Ella, a merry, pretty girl, whose chief delight was in teasing her brother, of whom, however, she was extremely fond. The family lived in a handsome home at the corner of Hill and Maple Streets in a choice residential section of Lenox.

Garry was strong and well built for his age, and a natural leader in all boyish sports, especially football, of which he was an ardent devotee. He had a frank, sunny face and a

manly, straightforward disposition. Chief among his friends were Nick Danter and Ted Dillingham, whose respective fathers were partners in the largest department store in Lenox, Rooster Long and Bill Sherwood. They had been drawn together by mutual liking, and this friendship had been further cemented by the interest that all took in the game of football.

But if Garry had many warm friends, he also had some enemies, of whom the principal one was Sandy Podder, a loose-principled, dissipated youth somewhat older than Garry and his chums, with whom Garry had frequently come in conflict, due to Sandy's low tricks and scheming. To these were added Chat Johns and Bud Warding, bullies of the same stripe who had been in Garry's class at the Hill Street Grammar School. Later came Lent Stewart, son of a rich broker, who, despite the fact that Garry had once saved him from drowning, was unfriendly and found in Sandy Podder a congenial pal and abettor of his plans.

How Garry's enthusiasm for football prompted him to organize a team in his grammar school; the trials and tribulations of the eleven as it was gradually licked into shape; how Garry thwarted the plans of Sandy Podder and some traitors in his own school; what difficulties he met and what obstacles he sur-

mounted before he led his team to victory over the other grammar schools of the town—all these and other adventures are narrated in the first volume of this series entitled: "Garry Grayson's Hill Street Eleven; or, The Football Boys of Lenox."

The next fall Garry entered the Lenox high school, accompanied by Nick, Ted, Rooster and Bill. Here they found themselves bucking against the tradition that no freshman could be permitted to play on the regular football team. They did get places, however, on the scrubs, and gave the regulars all they could do to hold their own.

Sickness depleted the Lenox High regular team. That gave Garry his chance, and how his wonderful playing helped Lenox to the championship of the High School League is fully told in the second book of the series, entitled: Garry Grayson at Lenox High; or, The Champions of the Football League."

Now to return to the frantic boys as they tossed the boards aside to free their imprisoned comrade while the flames crept ever nearer.

"Buck up, Ted, old boy," Garry cried cheerfully. "We'll have you out of there now in a jiffy."

"I know you will," replied Ted gamely in a

tone of confidence that he was far from feeling.

Now the rain, at which they had so grumbled a little while before, did them a good turn. Under the torrents that were by this time falling, the hastening fire began to relax some of its speed. It was this alone that made it possible for them at last to drag their comrade from under the last of the boards and carry him out into the open air. And never was the cool air so sweet as at that moment!

"Are you hurt anywhere, Ted?" asked Garry anxiously, as they propped the lad up against a tree.

"N-no, I guess not," gasped Ted, trying hard to summon up a smile.

Garry ran his hands over Ted's arms and legs and was infinitely relieved to find that no bones were broken.

"You see some of the boards formed a sort of tent over me so that I didn't get the full weight of the timbers," explained Ted.

"He's all right, fellows. We'll leave him here till he gets his breath back while we go and look after the pilot," announced Garry.

"I'm going too!" exclaimed Ted, seeing for the first time the still figure of the pilot. But an attempt to get to his feet showed him that first he must get a little rest and regain his strength, for his had been no light experience.

The others hurried over to the limp form of the aviator. He lay in a crumpled heap, and as the boys bent over him they feared for a moment that the worst had happened; that he was dead.

Big Bill Sherwood turned him over on his back, pulled open his leathern jacket, and slipped a hand within his shirt. The boys looked on with hearts stirring with fear and pity.

Slowly a relieved smile stole over Bill's face.

"I can feel his heart thumping," he said. "The poor fellow's a long way from being dead yet."

As though to prove the truth of the statement, the man opened his eyes and stared vacantly around him. Then he sat up suddenly, freeing himself from Bill's supporting arm.

"The wires!" he cried, wildly. "One is broken. I must fix it, quick! Quick!" Then with a groan: "Too late! Too late!" He was evidently recalling the fearful moment of the plunge. "She's falling! Those trees! How close they are! The trees!"

## CHAPTER III

### The Wounded Aviator

The man's words died off into silence, and the black sea of unconsciousness again surged up to meet him.

"Can it be that he's dead?" asked Rooster Long in an agitated voice, as he and his companions stared down upon the white, set face of the pilot.

"Chafe his hands and wrists," directed Garry, and he himself set the example.

There in the pouring rain, themselves aching because of their bruises, the boys worked over the stranger until they were finally rewarded by signs of returning consciousness. Ted, having regained some of his own strength, now joined his companions in doing what they could for the aviator.

The man opened his eyes and a glimmer of understanding came into them. He tried to sit up, but fell back with a groan.

"Who are you?" he asked the boys.

"We were in the hut when your airplane landed on it," Nick Danter replied. "There

isn't much left now of hut or airplane either," he added.

The aviator pressed a hand to his aching head.

"Was any one badly hurt?" he asked.

"Only yourself, except for a few bruises we got," replied Garry. "You certainly got the worst of it."

The stranger nodded and smiled with an air of relief.

"I'm lucky to be alive at all after that nose dive," he said, his face clouding as he looked toward the wrecked plane.

"How did it happen?" asked Rooster eagerly.

"If you will prop me up against that tree—thanks, that's much better. Why," turning to Rooster, "I hardly know how it happened myself, young fellow. I had been having engine trouble for some time, then two of the wire struts broke. That's about all I remember just now."

"You flew over here just a little while ago, didn't you? Isn't yours a mail plane?" asked Ted.

The aviator nodded.

"Yes, to both questions," he replied. "I turned back finally, intending to land at the airdrome over in Wimbledon and overhaul the engine. Then the storm caught me, there was

too much strain on the gear, some of the wires gave way, and—here I am. Sorry I had to involve you in my misfortunes, though," he added, looking more closely at the boys. "Are you sure you're not badly hurt?"

"We're all here and can speak for ourselves," replied Garry. "We're none the worse except for bruises. Do you feel better now?" he asked anxiously, as the spasm of pain crossed the face of the aviator.

"The trees broke my fall. I guess I'm all right except my legs. One of them hurts pretty badly. If you will help me get up—"

The boys sprang to him. Garry and Bill between them helped him to his feet. He leaned heavily upon his young assistants, and a groan forced its way between his clenched teeth.

"My left leg is useless, I'm afraid," he said. "I can't bear my weight upon it."

"We'll have to get a car to take you into town," said Garry. "I'll go to the nearest farmhouse and telephone for a doctor."

"Wait a minute," called the aviator, as Garry turned away. "My boy is staying with friends not far from here. If you will call up the house of these people, my son with come for me with his car."

"Good!" replied Garry. "And now what's the number?"

"Milford 7085. Ask for Cal Yates. I'm

Ross Yates," he added, with a faint smile, as the boys gently lowered him to the ground again, "World War aviator, at your service."

Rooster went with Garry, the two plodding through the driving rain to the nearest house, which was fully half a mile away. There they got permission to use the phone, called the number given by the aviator, and were lucky enough to find Cal Yates in.

The latter was frankly alarmed, even when Garry assured him that there did not seem to be anything serious the matter with his father.

"Tell dad I'll step on the gas and get there in breakneck time," said young Yates. "Thank you for calling me. See you later. S'long."

The receiver slammed up on the hook. Garry grinned at Rooster.

"Cal Yates is on his way. A speed boy, or I miss my guess," he hazarded.

"He can't be too speedy, either for his father's sake or ours," returned Rooster.

Cal Yates justified Garry's opinion of his speediness by appearing at the scene of the accident in an incredibly short time after receiving the telephone message.

He arrived in a low-slung racing car, painted a light blue and adorned with a gold stripe. The seat and steering wheel were so

low that the driver had fairly to lie on his back as he guided the car along.

Despite the gaudiness of the car and the boy's own air of sophistication, Cal seemed to be a likable young fellow and the boys took to him at once.

He brought his car to a sudden standstill as the boys hailed him from the side of the road. He wriggled clear of the imprisoning steering wheel and approached them eagerly.

"I say, dad isn't badly hurt, is he?" he asked with great anxiety. "You weren't trying just to let me down easy?"

"Not a bit of it," Garry assured him. "Come along and see for yourself."

Cal Yates followed, and they led him to the spot where his father lay. The latter was much stronger now and greeted his son jovially.

"Ahoy there, shipmate!" he called. "The old ship ran afoul of a rock, but the captain's far from being a dead one yet. Don't look so stirred up, son," as he saw tears mist the lad's eyes. "Except for something the matter with my left leg, I'm as good as ever."

"Say, Pater, but you gave me a scare!" The young fellow knelt beside his father, feeling him over to see that no bones were broken. "What ever made you do a nose dive, anyway? Didn't know you went in for such things.

"Dad was an ace in the World War, you know," Cal went on, turning to the boys, "and what he did to the enemy was a sin and a shame! Shot down about thirty planes—didn't you, Pater?—to say nothing of those that fell in the enemy's lines. As a matter of fact," he added with a quizzical smile, "dad won the war, though he's so modest he doesn't want to tell people about it."

Mr. Yates laughed, inadvertently moved his leg and groaned. Instantly his son was all penitent concern.

"Here I go, blabbing my fool head off when I ought to have you in the car by this time. Where do we go from here, Dad? To the doctor's? There's a good one near where I'm staying."

"There's a fine hospital in Lenox, if you want to take him there," suggested Garry.

"Thanks. But I guess I'd better go right to the house where Cal's staying," replied the aviator. "They're relatives of mine, and I can have the doctor see me there. I imagine it wouldn't do any harm for you boys to have the doctor look you over, too."

"Oh, we're all right," Bill Sherwood hastened to assure him.

"A good night's rest, and we'll be as fine as silk to-morrow morning," added Nick.

Up to this time Cal Yates had appeared to

have eyes only for his father. Now he regarded the boys with interest.

"Were you in the big smash-up too?" he asked.

For answer the boys led him to the plane atop the ruined hut, and told him briefly what had happened.

"Wriggling snakes! It's a wonder you weren't all squashed to a jelly," cried Cal. "You came within an ace of going into kingdom come, I'll tell the world!"

Although the boy was eager to get his father away and under the doctor's care, Mr. Yates insisted that they should give him some description of the injuries to the plane. They looked over it carefully.

"How about it?" called Mr. Yates. "Does it seem as though there were any use in salvaging it? Or is it ready for the junk heap?"

"Of course it's pretty badly battered, but it looks to me as though it were worth repairing," stated Garry.

"Sure thing, Dad," said Cal Yates airily. "With a new body, a couple of wings and a patch or two on the engine, the old boat ought to be almost as good as ever. And the mail bags are safe, all right. But you're the one to be salvaged first. Hold hard, and we'll have you in the car in a jiffy."

So saying, he and Bill Sherwood crossed

hands to form a seat, and the other boys helped the injured man into this improvised litter.

But the journey to the road and the car was a slow and painful one. When finally Mr. Yates, pale-faced and grim-lipped, was placed in the seat beside his son, the latter turned to the boys.

"Cram yourselves on the old bus some way," he said. "The place I'm staying is between here and the town, and I can give you a lift that far, anyway. I'll have to drive slowly on account of poor dad, so there won't be any danger of your getting jolted off. All ready? All right. Let's go!"

With the boys on the running boards, Cal started the motor of his flashy car, swung it in the right direction, and drove carefully along the road toward town.

On the way he kept up a running fire of light chatter, more, as the boys thought, to distract his father's attention from the pain he suffered than from a desire for conversation.

"Had a sort of smash-up myself this morning," he volunteered. "A guy with sandy hair and the meanest eyes I ever saw ran into me full tilt and then had the nerve to say I did it. His name I found out is Sandy Podder. Know him?"

"Do we?" chuckled Ted. "I'll say we do!"

"Well, I was going along nice and easy—no

more than fifty-five or sixty, I should say," resumed Cal, "when this guy came dashing around a curve of the road right at me. We both swerved and turned quickly so that only our mudguards were bent. But it was a close call, and I have it in for that Podder chap, believe me!"

The Lenox boys exchanged glances.

"Any time you need any help, let us know," Garry suggested, and Cal Yates laughed.

"You're on," he said. "I only wish I'd had you along this morning for witnesses. I could prove that Podder was on the wrong side of the road anyway and make him pay for a new mudguard. As it is," gloomily, "it's only my word against his, and that wouldn't go far in a court of law."

By this time they had almost reached the house that was Cal's destination. Rooster suddenly tapped Cal on the shoulder and pointed toward a car that had just turned a corner and was sweeping down toward them.

"Speaking of skunks," he grinned, "there's Sandy Podder now!"

## CHAPTER IV

### An Old Enemy

Sandy Podder was the last person Garry and his chums cared to see at that moment, torn and ragged as they were from their experience in the hut and with their muddy clothes hanging on them soddenly.

But Sandy saw them and did not miss the opportunity of jeering at them. He purposely passed so close to Cal's car as to splash more mud on them and narrowly missed sweeping them from the running board. So slender was the margin that Cal was forced partly to climb the grassy bank on the farther side of the road to prevent being run down.

Yates shook his fist wrathfully after the disappearing car. He turned and saw that the sudden swerve he had been forced to make had almost thrown his father from his seat. The jolt had meant agony for the wounded man. Cal Yates muttered furiously beneath his breath as he stopped the car and helped his father to a more comfortable position.

"If it wasn't for you, Dad," he exclaimed,

"I'd beat it back after that skunk and whale him within an inch of his life! After I've got you fixed, I'll do it, too! See if I don't!"

They reached the house, and the boys helped carry the wounded man inside, where he was received with the tenderest consideration and the doctor phoned for at once. Then the Lenox boys left, followed by repeated thanks, promising to call soon to see how the wounded aviator was getting along.

"We're sort of brothers-in-arms now," grinned Cal, as he bade the other boys goodbye. United for the downfall of one Sandy Podder. See you again soon. S'long."

At the Grayson house the chums parted. They were sore and bruised, eager for rest and a change to dry clothing.

"Meet you in the practice lot to-morrow, fellows," Garry called at parting. "We'll need to get in some good practice, or Mr. Phillips won't be able to see us with a telescope when it comes to making up the team."

There was a good deal of excitement in several Lenox homes that night. Mothers exclaimed at the sight of their tramplike young sons, and then listened with bated breath as the boys told of the narrow escape they had had either from being crushed by the airplane or being burned to death.

Garry's mother was no exception, and Ella

forebore to tease, in her relief at having her brother returned to her safe and sound. Mr. Grayson himself was scarcely less moved.

"Ross Yates," remarked Mr. Grayson later, when they had become calmer. "I used to see that name frequently in the papers during the war. He was one of the most daring of the American aces and must have a trunkful of decorations. I'm glad you were able to be of service to him."

It was a rather sorry-looking bunch of football players that met in the lot back of Garry's home the following day. Their bruises were still sore and irritating, despite hot baths and vigorous massaging.

"We're a fine bunch of cripples," declared Bill Sherwood, flexing his lame right arm experimentally. "A team from an old men's home could put it all over us."

"If Mr. Phillips could see us now, he'd have the jolt of his life," asserted Garry. "We've got to get the stiffness out of our joints some way. So come on—let's snap into it."

As he spoke, Garry Grayson whipped the ball to Nick. The latter was ruefully rubbing a sore knee. He saw the ball too late, made a frantic grab at it, and missed.

A chorus of jeers greeted him, as he limped off sheepishly in pursuit of the ball.

"Attaboy! The best miss I ever saw," gibed Ted.

"If Mr. Phillips had seen that, he'd have given you Ralph Wynn's place right off the bat," added Rooster Long. "That's the kind of captain we need to put pep into the team."

"Some one make that rooster stop crowing," grunted Nick, and, forgetting his stiff knee, met the ball with his foot in a masterly punt that, aimed for Rooster's head, hit him in the stomach and all but knocked him over.

"Anyway, I know enough to hang on to the ball," retorted Rooster, hugging the pigskin. "Which is more than some so-called football players can say for themselves."

"Say, are we playing football or having a kidding match?" cried Garry impatiently. "Pass me that football, Rooster. I want to find out."

After that they settled down to an hour of strenuous practice.

They brushed up on the signals, Garry giving the same set over and over again until the play was made like clockwork, the swift punt, feint, or forward pass timed to the fraction of a second.

In the interest aroused by the play sore muscles were ironed out magically, and at the end of an hour's time the boys had almost for-

gotten that there was anything wrong with them.

Rooster was practicing a place kick. Garry thought he was sending the ball too high, and told him so.

"By the time that pigskin lands, the other fellows will be all set for it," Garry contended. "They will have time to plan a counter-attack and our play will be spoiled. Anybody'd think you were trying to kick the clouds out of position."

"Say, listen, Garry," Rooster protested. "I couldn't kick that high. Honest I couldn't. You give me altogether too much credit. I can feel the blushes coming."

"Not a bit too much credit," grinned Garry. "Throw over the pigskin and I'll give you an example of how that kick looked to me. Then you can see how much too high it was."

Reluctantly Rooster surrendered the ball. Nick held it in position and Garry swung back his foot.

Plunk! The toe of Garry's shoe met the pigskin with a hollow sound that was music in the ears of his chums. All the force of his body was behind the kick, and the boys watched the ascent of the ball with interest.

High, high, higher it sailed.

"That's a sky ball, sure enough, Garry,"

chuckled Ted, then broke off and stared in amazement.

The ball, ever mounting, was directly over the roof of a house near the field. As the boys watched, it settled gently and landed on the top of the chimney!

"Jumping Jupiter! Now you've gone and done it, Garry!" cried Nick Danter.

"Cock-a-doodle-doo!" crowed Rooster. "I may be a high kicker, Garry, my lad; but I've never aimed for a chimney top yet."

"Some peachy kick," grinned Bill. "How in the world did you do it, old boy?"

Garry, staring at this new achievement, shook his head.

"You can search me!" he muttered. "Though you've got to admit it's a high kick," he added, with a grin. "The question now is—how are we going to get the ball down again?"

"Yeah, that's the question," said Rooster, coming to stand by Garry and squinting up at the football. "If we had wings now, it would be perfectly simple."

"It's simple, anyway," rejoined Nick. "Some one go to the door of that house and ask to be allowed to go on the roof. Once there, the rest is easy."

"Yes, once there," admitted Garry, scratching his head in perplexity. "It's plain to be

seen that you don't know who owns that house."

"Well, who does?" asked Ted, puzzled.

"An old crab who's likely to set his dog on us for trespassing," explained Garry. "He hates all sorts of sports on principle, and especially football. It's old Jacob Fish, the retired banker. He was in to see my dad about it once, and said that if he had his way he'd make a law forbidding football practice so close to private dwellings. To shut him up, dad told him that he would be personally responsible for any damage we might do."

The boys looked thoughtful.

"That sure complicates matters," affirmed Rooster. "But we've got to get that ball, whatever happens."

"Sure we have," agreed Garry. "But we might as well be foxy. I've got an idea."

"Hold on to it," begged Nick.

"Shoot and let us know the worst," urged Ted.

"We've got a ladder back of our house," explained Garry, growing more confident as his plans took shape. "If I can get that around to old Fish's house without being seen, I can climb up the back to the roof."

"Simple as rolling off a log," admitted Nick.

"Let's hope you don't roll off the roof,"

grinned Rooster, but Garry had already started off full tilt for the house.

The other boys went with him and helped him with the greatest caution to carry the ladder around to the back of the retired banker's house.

Having accomplished this without discovery, they felt elated. It would take only a few seconds now to climb the ladder, scramble up the sloping roof, and toss the recovered treasure into the field.

They placed the ladder very cautiously against the house, making as little noise as possible. Rooster and Bill held it steady, while Garry swarmed up it like a monkey.

He reached the roof and paused there to wave his hand at his chums. Then he made his way up the slope and soon reached the top. He gripped the chimney and reached for the ball.

Meanwhile, his chums had been watching his movements with such interest that they did not hear the stealthy steps of Jacob Fish until he was nearly upon them.

Then he jumped round the side of the house, his grizzled whiskers quivering with anger. He shook his fist at Garry.

"What are you doing there, you young scamp?" he shrilled. "You get off my roof!"

## CHAPTER V

### Into Empty Space

Garry Grayson obeyed the command of Mr. Fish, but not in the way that the man had intended he should.

He had dislodged the pigskin and was slipping cautiously down the roof to the ladder when the rasping cry of the old fellow startled him and made him lose his balance.

He slipped, tried to recover himself, overbalanced in the other direction, and fell, rolling over and over toward the edge of the roof!

With a yell of alarm, Bill, Rooster, Nick, and Ted rushed around to the spot where Garry seemed destined to fall. Jacob Fish himself was alarmed, for, much as he hated the young folks of the vicinity, he had had no idea of precipitating a fall.

As for Garry, the nightmare moment of losing his balance and that swift descent to the gutter of the roof seemed to occupy an eternity of time.

His clutching hands gripped empty air. He was utterly powerless to prevent the fall that

must follow. He breathed a prayer, braced himself, felt all solid substance give way beneath him!

Then he became conscious of the branches of a great tree that rushed up swiftly toward him, as though to strike him in the face.

Instinctively Garry reached out and his clutching fingers caught something that bent and gave beneath his weight but did not break. It was a stout branch of an old cedar tree that grew close beside the house.

Garry hung on with all the strength of his lithe young arms and drew himself into a safer position nearer the trunk, where he sat panting and marveling at his narrow escape.

Almost simultaneously with his first slip the football that he had pushed from the chimney had come down near the house, bouncing plump on Jacob Fish's bald head.

At this indignity the old man's rage broke all bounds, and not having Garry within reach to sate his vengeance, he made a dash for the other boys, who promptly took to their heels, having first assured themselves that Garry was safe in the tree.

"And they leave me to face the music!" muttered Garry. "Just wait till I get hold of them!"

He had started to descend to the ground when the raucous voice of Jacob Fish halted

him abruptly. The old man was fairly boiling over with rage. That a despised football should have descended upon his head was the crowning insult. It was past bearing. He shook his fist at Garry. His eyes glared at him.

"You stay up in that tree, you young blackguard!" he roared. "I've got you dead to rights. You will sneak up on my roof, will you? You will bounce a football on my head, will you?"

"It was an accident," began Garry.

"Don't talk to me!" roared the furious man. "I'll have none of your insolence, you young upstart. Stay where you are," he commanded, as Garry again started to descend the tree.

"I'm not a monkey. I can't hang on to the branch of a tree all the rest of my life," responded Garry, whose own temper was beginning to be ruffled by the old man's unreason.

"None of your impudence!" shouted Fish. "You try to come down out of that tree, young man, before I'm ready you should and you'll be sorry."

"I'm coming just the same," declared Garry, at the same time coming down another foot or two.

He hesitated, however, as a roar came from the enraged man. The latter was running with surprising agility for one of his age toward a

large doghouse that stood a little way back in the yard.

Fish's police dog was the terror of the neighborhood, and more than one anxious parent of small children had threatened to do away with so vicious an animal.

Jacob Fish whistled to the dog, who came out from the kennel and stretched himself in leisurely, graceful fashion. He was a beautiful animal, but as fierce with strangers or those he hated as his master was. In fact, there were many who said that the venom of old Jacob Fish had entered into the dog and made him far fiercer than nature had originally intended.

Now the old man released the dog from the chain that held him to the kennel and pointed to the tree.

"Watch him, Roy! Don't let him get down! Hold him there!"

Garry looked down at the snarling dog and its snarling master. Slowly a smile crept over his face. He was about to play a joke on old Jacob Fish and the prospect pleased him immensely.

For, as it happened, the police dog and Garry were firm friends. Garry had been attracted by the beauty of the animal when Fish had first bought him. And as the lad had a great love for dogs, he determined to get on good terms with Roy.

So, frequently when he had passed the Fish house he had spoken wheedlingly to the dog behind the fence, until the brute came to know him and even thumped his tail once or twice in acknowledgment of a friendly feeling.

Thus encouraged, Garry had gone further, sometimes tossing Roy special tidbits that he had brought from his own table until the dog had been completely won over and permitted Garry to caress his head through the pickets of the fence.

Naturally, Garry had been careful to keep these advances from the steely eye of Mr. Fish, so that the latter had not the slightest inkling of the friendship that existed between his savage dog and the hated "Grayson boy."

Jacob Fish rubbed his skinny hands together with satisfaction as he viewed the situation.

"Now you'll stay there until I choose to let you come down," he gloated, "and that'll be some time yet, I'm telling you. You'll have to go without your supper, and you'll have time to think over what a graceless scamp you are."

Garry said nothing.

Jacob Fish enjoyed his triumph for a few moments, and then, as the chill evening air struck his bare head uncomfortably, he moved toward the house.

"I'll be watching you from the window," he said as he moved away. "But Roy will stay

here to bear you company. I guess he'll hold you for a while. He he!" And he cackled shrilly.

He went inside the house, and a moment later Garry saw him at a window, where he had settled himself comfortably to enjoy the boy's discomfiture.

Garry lowered himself to a branch only a few feet over the dog's snapping jaws. The beast growled ominously.

"Hello, Roy!" Garry said, in the caressing tone he had always used toward the animal. "What's the matter with you, old fellow? Don't you know a friend when you see one?"

At sight and sound of him Roy seemed puzzled. The deep growl died in his throat. His ears cocked forward inquiringly. He stepped about the tree daintily, mincingly, as though about to play.

Garry, from the corner of his eye, saw that the change in the dog's attitude had not been lost upon its master. Jacob Fish had started from his chair and was staring bewilderedly at the two.

But Garry now was willing to stake all on a chance. He dropped quickly to the ground and went up to Roy, putting his hand on his head in friendly fashion.

"Good old boy!" he said. "I knew you

wouldn't go back on a friend. Thoroughbreds never do."

Roy snuggled up closer to him and rubbed against him.

With a face purple with suppressed fury, Jacob Fish threw up the window.

"Wh-what does this mean?" he sputtered. "Leave my dog alone, you young scoundrel! Get out of here before I put you out."

"I'm going," said Garry calmly.

"You'd better!" shouted the man. "G-get out before I lose my t-temper."

Garry thought to himself that that temper had been lost some time before. He gave a final pat to the dog's head and started toward the gate.

His foot struck against something, and seeing that it was the football, he picked it up and got out into the street. As he rounded the tall hedge that closed in the Fish grounds he came face to face with his twin sister, Ella, and her chum, Jane Danter.

"Oh, Garry," giggled Ella. "We saw you in the tree and thought you were a new kind of bird. My, but you did look funny!"

## CHAPTER VI

### Getting into Swing

"I probably looked lots funnier than I felt," replied Garry Grayson to his sister, reddening sheepishly.

"You were having some trouble with that awful Fish man, weren't you?" asked Jane Danter, as the three walked down the street together.

"Trouble's no name for it!" answered Garry. "It looked for a while as though I were treed for fair. And all for the sake of this pigskin!"

"What had the football to do with it?" asked Ella. "Do tell us about it, Garry. We're awfully curious to know how you got in that tree! Aren't we, Jane?"

Jane nodded.

"Well, you see," began Garry gravely, "I rather felt the need of some setting up exercises—"

"Yes, you did, after having an airplane fall on you yesterday!" scoffed his twin.

"Nick was telling me about that," put in Jane. "It must have been thrilling."

"Well, it might have been," responded Garry doubtfully; "only we didn't happen to think of it that way—"

"But what happened just now in Mr. Fish's cedar tree?" Ella broke in impatiently. "That's what I'm waiting to know."

"Patience, little one," soothed Garry. "I was trying to tell you. I wanted some exercise. My daily dozen isn't enough for me. So first of all, I kicked the football to the top of old Fish's chimney—"

"Garry Grayson! You never!" cried both girls together.

"Sure! It was easy. Some time I'll show you how I did it. And of course then I had to go for it. So we fellows dragged a ladder to the back of the Fish house—"

"How did you dare?" cried Jane. "I'd have been afraid of that awful dog."

"I'll tell you about him later," chuckled Garry. "Anyway, I got up the ladder and on to the roof and was just pushing the football off the chimney when old Fish yelled at me—"

"And you jumped!" gasped Ella.

"No," corrected Garry. "I rolled—right off the roof and into the branches of the cedar tree."

"Garry! You never!"

"I did," insisted Garry, as though the feat were something to be proud of. "I couldn't do it again if I tried. But this time I did. I don't know whether a branch caught my hand or my hand caught a branch, but, anyway, there I was, swinging in the air right over old Jacob's head." He then gave the particulars of what had followed.

The picture of the malevolent old fellow's thwarted rage provoked the girls to glee, but Ella had a word of warning for her brother, nevertheless.

"Roy may not bite you, but old Fish will if he gets a chance," she said, as she turned into her gate with Jane. "Next time you want exercise, you'd better kick your old football on some one else's chimney."

Garry privately thought this was very good advice, though he outwardly scoffed at it. Jacob Fish, as hard as granite and already disliking boys in general, would have a private grudge against him especially and would do him mischief if he could.

Garry's chums had been hovering around, waiting for him to get free from the girls, and now they descended upon him.

"You're a fine bunch of quitters, you are!" Garry accosted them with mock indignation. "Take to your heels at the first sign of trouble!

What kind of a way is that to treat a pal, I'd like to know!"

"You were up a tree anyway, Garry," was Rooster's defense. "We knew you were safe."

"I was up a tree, all right," conceded Garry.

"Old Fish sure looked dangerous," put in Ted Dillingham.

"And so did his dog," laughed Bill. "We took one look at that canine's face and judged it was time for us to do the vanishing act."

They decided that discretion was the better part of valor and that practice near the house of Jacob Fish had better be relinquished for a time. The next time, Roy might not prove to be so amenable to friendly advances.

"Suppose we run up to the house where Ross Yates is staying and see how he is getting along," suggested Garry, when the boys came together again the next day.

"Good idea," pronounced Bill, and as the others were of the same mind the lads started at once.

Naturally the subject of their conversation was their adventure of the previous afternoon, and Garry was compelled to tell in more detail how he had wheedled Roy and outwitted Roy's master. The story was told to the accompaniment of boisterous laughter, and it was only when their mirth was exhausted that a more serious aspect of the case appealed to them.

"You made him look foolish, Garry, and a man like Fish will never forgive that," said Rooster. "You've made an enemy for life."

"Well, you can bet that I'm not going to lie awake at night worrying about it," laughed Garry.

On reaching their destination the chums were told that Ross Yates was getting along as well as could be expected. His left leg had been badly twisted and several of the tendons torn, so that when he recovered he might have a slight limp. He was suffering also from some minor internal injuries and from shock. In a week's time it would probably be possible for him to see visitors. Cal, they found, was out somewhere in his car.

The boys promised to call again about a week later, and left the house, much relieved to find that nothing serious was wrong with the man for whom they had conceived a great respect and liking.

"I wonder if Cal Yates found Sandy Plodder and gave him the thrashing he promised," remarked Bill, as they were on their way back to town.

"I'd like to have been on the spot if he did," laughed Rooster. "And I'd have liked to hand that bird a few wallops on my own account."

"We all have a score to settle with him," affirmed Garry. "They say everything comes

to him who waits, and perhaps our chance will come."

As the time drew nearer for the fall opening of the Lenox schools, the football enthusiasts in the high school speculated with increasing eagerness upon the probable choice of boys to fill the vacancies on the first eleven.

Garry Grayson thought of little else, and Ella more than once complained that their house was being changed into a gridiron.

"It's a wonder he doesn't ask you to pass the pigskin instead of the pork," she said aggrievedly to her father, as he was carving a fresh ham. "The other night he did ask for dummies instead of dumplings. His case is getting serious, Dad. I think you ought to have him consult a specialist."

"I'm not worrying very much," responded Mr. Grayson, with a smile. "It's only a pronounced case of footballitis, and that seldom has fatal results."

The opening day of school came at last, and the other boys were in high spirits as they stopped on their way for Garry, who was already waiting for them at the gate. There was a tang in the air that suggested football weather, and as they swung along the street they felt in fine fettle.

"I wonder when we'll get the first football call," conjectured Rooster Long. "Ought to

be pretty soon, I should think. The game with Pawling comes early in the season, and it will take considerable whipping into shape to get the team ready for it. Those fellows are hard nuts to crack."

"Can't come too soon to suit me," replied Garry, as he tossed his books into the air and caught them by the strap as they came down. "I never felt in better shape at the opening of the season. I'm just crazy to get out on the field."

When they reached the high school they found the campus already thronged with students. From several groups friendly greetings were shouted to the newcomers, and they responded in kind.

Two of the first they ran up against were Tom Allison and Pete Maddern.

"Great to see you back, fellows!" exclaimed Tom heartily. "It will be fine to round up the old gang and get out on the field. Make believe we won't make the other teams in the league sit up and take notice this year!"

"We'll run rings around every bunch in it," declared Rooster without regard to modesty. "The rest of those poor misguided guys won't even have a look in."

"Probably that's just what they're saying about us," laughed Garry. "If we win the

championship again this year, we'll have to work hard for it."

As Garry spoke, Sandy Podder and Lent Stewart happened to be passing. They eyed the group of friends malevolently, and then looked at each other with a grin.

"There are those fake heroes spouting again," growled Sandy, in a voice designedly loud enough to reach those for whom it was intended. "To hear them talk you'd think they were the whole cheese."

"Ain't it the truth?" drawled Lent. "Lenox never knew anything about football until they came here."

"Say, listen, Sandy Podder! And you, Lent Stewart!" Garry whirled on his heel and regarded the two contemptuously. "Whenever either of you two fellows makes the Lenox team or does anything worth while for the school, it will be time for you to talk. Until then you'd better sing small. Get me?"

## CHAPTER VII

### Picking the Team

Sandy Podder and Lent Stewart scowled savagely at Garry's retort. They tried to reply, but their snarling response was drowned in the laughter of the bystanders.

"Attaboy, Garry!"

"Poor old Lenox with Sandy Podder on the team!" chortled Bill Sherwood.

"You, Lent," called a tormentor, as the two cronies, chagrined and furious, hurried away, "going to answer the football call? Better let us break the news gently to Mr. Phillips so that he won't die of joy."

For some time after Sandy and Lent had disappeared the campus rang with jests at their expense. But the sound of the gong put an end to the merriment, and the students of Lenox High filed into its corridors for another year of work and play.

As Garry and his chums reached their classroom they were still discussing the run-in with their enemies.

"You made a wise crack there, Garry," Nick

Danter chuckled. "It sure got under their skin. But I didn't like the looks in the eyes of those fellows as they passed you. They'll plan some dirty trick to get even with you."

Then began the round of lessons and the getting acquainted with new classes and new teachers.

Garry Grayson and his chums had Mr. Phillips in English again, and were heartily glad of that. The latter gave them a cordial greeting when they entered his class, and at the close of the period detained them for a moment.

"Feeling fit?" he asked with a smile, as he looked at their sturdy figures and bronzed cheeks.

"Fine as silk," answered Garry, and the others nodded assent.

"I'm going to post the bulletin in a day or two," said Mr. Phillips. "I want to get you football boys out on the field early. We've got some heavy work before us."

The boys were not so favorably impressed by their Latin teacher. This was a tall, severe looking gentleman, who answered to the name of Blythe.

"Though where he got that handle is a mystery," Rooster whispered to Garry at a moment when the teacher's eye was off him. "I never saw any one who looked less blithe in my life."

Two days went by before the eagerly antici-

pated football call was posted on the board. That afternoon, as soon as the boys were released from their studies, they flocked to the gymnasium to learn their fate.

For Garry and his chums the ban of the first year was now removed. They were no longer freshmen and as such tacitly barred from eligibility to the first team. Tradition, as Ted inelegantly put it, was "nix" for them now. The bars were down. Merit was the only thing that counted, and Garry and his chums had as good a chance of making the team as any boys in school.

Now the great, the all-important question was, what choice would Mr. Phillips make? Who among the scrubs of last year would be selected to fill those vacancies on the first team?

"Remember how Ralph Wynn talked to us last year?" asked Bill.

"Do we remember?" repeated Rooster. "How he told us that we had no chance to make the first team because we were freshmen, mere worms of the dust, so to speak."

"Look at the bunch of youngsters coming," said Nick, as a noisy crowd poured into the gymnasium. "Looks as though Mr. Phillips would have plenty to choose from."

"Most all of them are freshmen," remarked Bill condescendingly. "I suppose each one

expects to be made captain of the regulars the first crack out of the box."

Then they all laughed, remembering their own great ambitions the preceding year.

"It isn't so long ago that we were freshmen ourselves," observed Ted Dillingham. "But to hear us talk, you'd think we were seniors, at the very least."

"Here comes Coach Phillips!" some one cried, and the boys turned to see the teacher of English entering the gymnasium.

There was an excited murmur from the boy All braced instinctively, trying to look very stalwart and determined, so that when the coach's eyes turned upon them he would know at once that he had found a treasure, and they scanned his face as though they hoped to find in its expression some key to their fate.

Mr. Phillips looked them over smilingly.

"I see you've turned out in fine style," he said. "Plenty of beef among you, too; and that's good. I'll need a bunch of huskies this year."

He paused for a moment, scanning them collectively and individually before proceeding.

"As you all know," he continued, "the June commencement crippled our first team quite seriously. The man we shall miss most is, of course, Ralph Wynn, our former captain and quarterback."

There was a stir among the boys, and many of the upper classmen nodded acquiescence.

"We'll have a hard time replacing him, sir," said McCarty, right guard of the regulars.

"I grant that," replied Mr. Phillips. "But we will do it. There is as good material now at Lenox as the school ever had. Our job is to develop it and mold it into a good fighting team that we'll be proud of.

"Now," he went on briskly, "I'm not going to make any change in the lineup at present, as far as the old players are concerned. They did so well last year in the positions they occupied that I think to shift them would weaken the team. That doesn't mean, of course, that they will continue to be fixtures if they fall down on the job. But for the present they keep their places.

"I will name them now, and as I do so I want them to stand to one side so that we may see clearly the members of our reorganized team."

There was an increased tension in the air as Mr. Phillips took a notebook from his pocket and opened it. The critical moment was approaching.

Mr. Phillips began to read.

"Walker, center. Painter, left guard."

The boys named stood apart, and the freshmen looked on them with envious eyes, so great

and awesome did these veterans of the gridiron appear to them.

"Benny Knapp, you will play left half again," Mr. Phillips continued. "McCarty will be at right guard and Aleck Anderson will take his old position at right tackle. Ollie Scarsdale, you will take left end. Dick Thomas, right end. There we have our seven, all that are left of last year's eleven."

Again Mr. Phillips paused and looked the aspirants over with a quizzical smile.

"That leaves still four positions to fill," he said. "From the looks of you boys I imagine you are pretty anxious to know who is going to have them. Am I right?"

Laughter greeted the question, followed by a dead and tense silence. Mr. Phillips smiled and hurried to the point.

"All right. I won't keep you in suspense any longer," he said. "The positions still to be filled are those of fullback, right halfback, left tackle and last, but decidedly not least, quarterback, with which in this case will go the title of captain."

A murmur ran through the crowd of boys. The coveted position of captain and quarter! Who among their number was to be the lucky one?

Garry exchanged excited glances with his chums, and then riveted his attention upon the

czar of their destinies as the latter again spoke.

"Because of the splendid record Long made last year, I am going to put him in as full-back."

Over Rooster's face spread a beatific look blended with incredulity. Pushed forward by less fortunate comrades, he stammered:

"Th-thanks, Mr. Phillips," and stepped over proudly to the lineup of regulars.

"Don't thank me yet," warned the coach. "There will be half a dozen good fellows fighting for your job and crowding close on your heels. You will have to fight to hold that position."

"Next," he said, and fixed his eyes on Tom Allison, "I'm putting you in, Allison, at left tackle. Think you can make good there?"

"Gee, Mr. Phillips, I'll try!" Tom promised and, face shining, moved over to the regulars.

Only two positions left!

The boys exchanged glances and shifted about uneasily. The suspense was becoming unbearable.

"Some one's got to be left out," Bill whispered in Garry's ear. "I've got a hunch this is my unlucky day."

Mr. Phillips was speaking again.

"That leaves only two positions to be filled," he said. "But they are the extremely important ones of right half and quarter. There are

two or three players on the scrubs of last year whom I have considered for right halfback, but my choice has finally been made. I have decided—" He paused, and the gymnasium was so silent that one might have heard a pin drop. "I have decided," he repeated, "to give Nick Danter a chance to show what he can do in that position."

Nick was popular with the boys, and a murmur of satisfaction came from the crowd.

"Rah, Nick. Show them what you're made of, boy," called out Pete Maddern.

"He'll have to show us," remarked Mr. Phillips gravely. "And so will all the rest of you that are chosen. These positions that I have given you are only temporary—remember that—and to hold them you've got to make good.

"Now for quarterback and captain," he went on, "I have chosen a boy who did some brilliant work for the team last year. At that time he was captain and quarter back of the scrubs. This year he will be captain and quarterback of the regulars. Stand up, Garry Grayson!"

## CHAPTER VIII

### Something Brewing

The last words of the coach were almost lost in a tumultuous roar from Garry Grayson's friends—and there was no one in that crowd who was not his friend—that echoed back from the walls of the gymnasium.

"Garry Grayson! Garry Grayson!" they cried.

"Hurrah for the new captain!"

"Yea, Garry! Go to it, old boy!"

Coach Phillips presently silenced the uproar with a wave of his hand.

"I see that my appointment meets with approval," he laughed. "If Garry Grayson makes as good a captain of the first team as he did of the scrubs, I don't think we'll have any reason to complain. And now let's get down to business again."

As Garry, flushed and happy, took his stand with the regulars, his first wild thrill of elation was dampened by a sober second thought.

Bill Sherwood and Ted Dillingham had been left out!

Of course, all could not hope to make the first team. Still, it was hard on old Bill and Ted. Garry looked at them covertly and could see that they were trying hard to hide their disappointment.

Mr. Phillips had finished with the regulars—at least for the present. Now he began briskly to form the scrub team.

Pete Maddern was made captain in Garry's old place. Bill and Ted retained their former positions at center and left end respectively. To fill the positions left vacant by the promotion of Rooster, Tom, and Nick, three promising players were chosen from the applicants.

Those who had not been chosen tried hard to hide their disappointment under a brave exterior while Mr. Phillips gave them a short, encouraging talk.

"Those whose names I have not called today need not give up hope of making the team," he said. "A number of things may happen—in fact, are bound to happen—during a strenuous football season that will result in a hurry call for recruits. So keep yourselves in readiness to fill in at a moment's notice.

"As for you boys who are to represent Lenox High on the gridiron, every single one of you will have to work his hardest to prove himself worthy of the position. There are good boys on the scrubs just waiting to jump into your

shoes, and they'll do it at the least excuse you give them." Here a faint cheer went up from members of the second team.

"Now, as you all know," the coach added, his eyes traveling over the alert faces of the first-string boys, "the game with Pawling is only a short time away. We'll have to dig our toes in and work hard to get ready for it. And as the first possible moment is not too soon to start, I want you all to report for practice tomorrow afternoon."

There was another cheer at this, and then all thronged out tumultuously.

"Gee, Garry, there's luck for you, old boy!"

It was Ted who spoke, as Garry's bunch were out on the campus, books slung over shoulders, eagerly discussing the organization of the teams. Nick and Rooster were wildly elated, and Ted and Bill strove hard to hide their own chagrin and disappointment and enter heartily into the triumph of their intimates.

"Lucky, maybe—but deserved luck," Bill added to Ted's statement. "After Garry's work on the gridiron last year, he rates a place on the regulars."

"But quarter and captain! I'll tell the world that's some lofty perch," cried Nick gleefully. "With Garry leading the charge there isn't a team in the league that can stand against us."

"Easy on that stuff," laughed Garry. "Your own position isn't such a slouch, if it comes to that."

"I'll say it isn't," agreed Nick, still half incredulous of his good fortune. "When he called my name for the backfield I thought he must mean some one else and had got the names mixed."

"There's modesty for you!" jeered Rooster.

It was only on their way to school the following morning that the boys thought of Garry's triumph in relation to Sandy Podder and his cronies.

"Make believe that fellow won't be ready to bite nails when he finds out that his best enemy is captain of the Lenox team," chuckled Rooster. "I'll bet there'll be a fine old gnashing of teeth, Garry, my lad."

"As long as he only gnashes them I shan't worry," laughed Garry. "And if he tries to bite, he'll find out perhaps that I have teeth of my own."

"And what's even more important," put in Nick, " a good strong fist that knows what it's made for."

Practice started off with a bang that afternoon. If Mr. Phillips had had any doubt about the spirit of the boys, it was speedily dissipated by the way they went at their work. As a matter of fact, he had to hold them in rather

than use the spurs, for he wanted to get them into shape gradually with a minimum of lameness and bruises caused by overwork so early in the season.

That day was devoted chiefly to group practice. Walker at center did some one-man blocking that won commendation from the coach. Tom Allison also justified his position in the line by his fine work at tackling. The backfield practiced punting, place kicking, and forward passing, while the ends did good work in getting down the field under punts.

The scrubs were on their mettle too, and showed such good stuff that the regulars were spurred on to still greater effort.

A tackling dummy had been rigged up in one corner of the field, and the boys assailed it in turn with so much vim and vigor that arnica was sure to be in request that night to soothe their numerous bruises.

If the first day of practice was eminently satisfactory, those that followed were no less so. Mr. Phillips led his teams on steadily, gradually increasing his driving power until the boys were working at their limit. The fights between the regulars and the scrubs had almost the fierceness of games with rival schools.

Garry had slipped easily into Ralph Wynn's old position, and was developing a quality of leadership that filled the coach with optimism.

Ralph had been a great leader, but Mr. Phillips thought he saw in Garry the makings of a still greater one. Under his handling the team was being developed into a swiftly moving, formidable fighting machine that promised to maintain or exceed the best traditions of Lenox High.

"It looks like a good season for Lenox," the coach said to the boys at the end of an especially hard afternoon's practice. "That's all for to-day, boys. Go home and get some rest. You've earned it. You're on edge now, and I don't want you to go stale."

This was just three days before the first game with Pawling, which was scheduled to take place on the latter's grounds.

On the way home the boys were hilarious.

"We'll wipe up the ground with them!" cried Rooster Long exultantly. "The way we're working now they won't have a chance."

"Cock-a-doodle-doo!" jeered Nick. "Don't count your chickens before they're hatched, Rooster, my lad. In other words, don't crow till we've won."

"Your team is in good fighting condition too, Bill," said Garry. "You certainly gave us a run for our money this afternoon. And you blocked a pretty slick play of mine, too," he added, with a grin. "I was so sore I could have slugged you."

Bill chuckled.

"No favoritism, Garry, old boy," he said. "Just because you and Nick and Rooster have made the first team, you needn't expect I'm going to hold back my good right arm when it's good for a tackle. Well, here's where I leave you," he continued, turning down a side street. "I promised dad I'd stop at the hardware store and buy him a new monkey wrench for his tool kit. Some one lost his old one, and he's unreasonable enough to suspect me. So long. See you all to-morrow."

On his way to the store Bill had to pass a double garage belonging to a friend of Sandy Podder's, the doors of which opened on a side street.

Bill heard the sound of voices from the further side of the garage and stopped instinctively as he heard a familiar name.

"What do you know about Garry Grayson's getting Ralph Wynn's place on the team?" said a voice. "Getting pretty well up in the world, that young rooster is."

"Thinks he's too all-fired important," growled another voice, which Bill recognized as that of Sandy Podder. "It's up to us to take him down a peg or two."

"Yeah?" There was a faint jeer in the other voice. "I've heard that before. But who's going to do it?"

"I am, that's who!" There was a ferocity in the tone that chained Bill's attention. "I'm sick of the airs that fellow gives himself. He gives me a pain in the neck. I've got a lot of old scores to even up with him, and I'm going to get even pretty quick."

"You sound as though you had some kind of a plan." There was curiosity in the voice of Sandy's companion. "If it's the kind of stuff you've already pulled—"

"This scheme is bound to work." There was confidence in Sandy's tone. "It's a pip. Now listen and I'll tell you how you can help—"

Bill crept closer to the garage, intent on losing no detail of the plot. But just at that moment the door of the house to which the garage belonged opened and a woman stood on the threshold.

"Lent!" she called. "Come here! I want you to do something for me."

## CHAPTER IX

### Hitting the Line

Sandy Podder uttered an exclamation of disgust that was heartily echoed by Bill. Here, Bill was on the point of hearing something that would enable him to put Garry Grayson on his guard, and all his plans were spoiled by this untimely interruption.

He stole silently from the shadow of the garage and went off whistling down the street as though he had just at that moment turned the corner.

It would be unfortunate if Sandy were to suspect himself overheard just then. It might put him on his guard and make the discovery of his plot more difficult.

Bill Sherwood was worried. He felt that Sandy would stop at nothing to get even with the boy he hated and longed to see humbled.

"I won't say anything to Garry about it till after the Pawling game, anyway," he decided, as he absently bought and paid for the monkey wrench. He slipped the purchase into his pocket and forgot about his change until the

grinning hardware man called him back for it.

"I haven't anything definite anyway, and it might upset Garry a little and put him off his form," ran on the boy's thoughts when he was once more in the street. "Time enough later on when we've got game safely bagged. Gee!" with a scowl, "it's a wonder the fellows don't get together and run that Sandy Podder and Lent Stewart out of town!"

The next two days passed without any outbreak on the part of Sandy and his cronies, and Bill began to hope that Sandy's plot, like so many of that fellow's plans, had proved to be unworkable when it came up for further consideration.

The day of the Pawling game was favored with beautiful football weather. The sun was shining, but there was a decided chill in the air that was welcome to the young athletes, who would soon be drenched in perspiration as they fought for the glory of their respective schools.

"Rumors have been coming from time to time that the Pawling team has been going great guns in practice, so I hope it is with no expectation of a cinch that your Lenox team is going over to Pawling," remarked Garry's father to him the night before the first league game was to be played.

"Not on your life, Dad! We'll have a fight on our hands."

A large delegation of their rooters journeyed over to the Pawling grounds with the team on the day of the game. Garry's feeling that a hard contest awaited them was not diminished by the way Pawling showed up in practice.

A deafening roar arose from the stands as the teams came out for the game. Most of its volume was due, of course, to the Pawling supporters, who outnumbered the Lenox rooters three to one. But Lenox showed up strongly in the shouting nevertheless, and its cheer leaders performed all sorts of acrobatic feats before the stands as they rallied their cohorts to further efforts.

"Pawling! Pawling! Send them home bawling," yelled the home partisans.

"Lenox! Lenox! Len, Len Len!" came back in thunderous defiance. "You licked them last year! Now lick them again!"

Pawling won the toss and elected to kick off. Brewster sent the ball whirling down the field for thirty yards. Rooster ran it back for ten before he was downed, and the ball was Lenox's on its own forty-yard line.

Walker snapped back the ball to Garry, who passed it to Rooster, and the latter plunged through a hole between left end and tackle for four yards. Tom Allison took the ball on the next try and gained one more. Nick Danter ploughed through for a gain of three and on

the next attempt pulled off four more, Lenox making its yardage on downs with something to spare and still retaining possession of the ball.

"Gee, that line's as full of holes as a piece of Swiss cheese," panted Nick to Garry.

"Don't kid yourself," warned Garry. "They may take a brace at any minute."

Garry himself went through guard and tackle for four yards. Tom Allison had the next try, but was thrown back for a loss of two. Rooster Long made three between left tackle and end. With five to go on the fourth down, Garry shot a pass to Nick, who skirted the end for six yards before he was tackled and thrown.

Again Lenox had made its distance, and the enemy's goal had become perceptibly closer. But now Pawling had begun to find itself and put up a stiffer resistance. On the next four downs Lenox gained but six yards, and the ball passed into the possession of Pawling.

Here the whole aspect of the game changed in a moment. After two downs that gained but three yards, Tucker, the fullback of the Pawling team, drove the ball whirling through the air for a magnificent punt of over sixty yards that sent it rolling over the Lenox goal line. It was put in play on Lenox's twenty-yard line and in the visitors' possession.

This was bad enough, but as misfortunes

never come singly, Lenox was penalized for clipping and had to go back to its one-yard line, though still retaining the ball.

It was entirely too close for comfort from the Lenox viewpoint, and Rooster promptly punted out of danger to the thirty-yard line where the ball was gathered in by Beebe. Pawling failed to make its distance against the desperate resistance of Lenox, and the ball passed to the latter, which twice made its yardage on downs, bringing the ball to the middle of the field. Then Garry completed two passes to Nick, who carried the ball to the Pawling twenty-yard line. Then there was an exchange of punts that left the ball in practically the same position. A pass to Rooster was uncompleted, and the period ended with the ball in Pawlin's possession on its own thirteen-yard line.

Neither side had scored, although at various times the goal of each had been in danger. But the advantage remained with Lenox, as the ball was close to the enemy's line and for most of the quarter had been in the Pawling territory.

"Too bad that we didn't have two minutes longer," panted Nick, as the warriors of the respective teams were trying to get their breath in the brief minute between periods.

"Righto," assented Garry. "But I think we have their number, Nick. They've got a good team, but we have a better one. We're just as

good on the defense and better on the offense, and this next quarter is going to prove it."

When the period opened, Dorr, of Pawling, kicked out of danger and Rooster ran the ball back to the forty-five yard line. On the next play Garry made a brilliant run through a broken field, with splendid interference by Nick and Tom, and landed the ball on the Pawling twenty-seven yard line. Rooster gained five yards through center, and then Nick tried for a field goal. He missed, and Tucker ran the ball back to his own fifteen-yard line.

Twice Pawling tried to gain through the line, but failed. Then a long punt by Dorr carried the ball to the Lenox thirty-five yard line. Rooster returned the punt, and the ball was Pawling's on its own five-yard line. Tucker then kicked out of danger, and Nick grabbed the ball on Pawling's thirty-yard line.

Knapp tried for a field goal, but the ball went short. Pawling failed to gain through the line in two attempts. Tucker fumbled on the next play but recovered the ball, and then Pawling punted out.

After this a beautiful forward pass, Garry to Knapp, gained twenty yards through left tackle. Then the stands were electrified when Garry put a cannon shot over to Nick and the latter went over the Pawling line for the first touchdown of the game. Rooster missed the

kick, and the score was 6 to 0 in favor of the visitors.

It was Lenox's chance to yell, and they split the air with their tumultuous cheers.

"Lennox! Lenox! Len, Len, Len!
You've licked them once,
You'll lick them again.
Lennox! Lenox! Len, Len, Len!"

Lenox kicked off, and then a fine forward pass, Jackson to Dorr, brought the ball to the Lenox thirty-five-yard line. The same combination put over another pass, gaining five yards around right end. Encouraged by this, Pawling resorted again to the aerial game, but two more attempts were uncompleted. On a fake pass Tucker was thrown for a loss, and Lenox took the ball on Pawling's thirty-five-yard line.

Lenox was penalized five yards for offside, but then Rooster made it first down on the Lenox thirty-eight-yard line. Nick failed to gain through center. He punted for fifty-seven yards, and it was Pawling's ball on their own twenty-yard line. Tucker made two attempts to make end runs on fake passes, but his gains were trifling. Then Pawling kicked out of danger and Lenox tried for a placement kick. It was blocked by Dorr, and the period ended

with the ball in midfield and the score still 6 to 0 in favor of Lenox.

It had been a ding-dong quarter, and through most of it the spectators in the stands had been on their feet, yelling their heads off, as first the one and then the other of the teams had the advantage. But the Lenox partisans had the edge in howling, for their team had drawn first blood, and those six hard-earned points looked as big as a mountain.

The weary warriors of both sides welcomed the fifteen minutes' rest with sighs of relief. They had played at top speed, and the strain on nerve and muscle had been tremendous.

Mr. Phillips was beaming as he looked over his boys, sprawled on the floor of the club-house, grimy, battered, bruised, but happy in having gained the lead.

"You've done well, boys," he commended them. "But remember, the game is only half over, and anything is liable to happen in football. Those six points look pretty big to you, but don't forget that a single touchdown by the other side will wipe out your lead and leave the game where it started. And if the try for goal succeeds after the touchdown, they'll be ahead of you. Get after them right from the start of the next quarter. Plough into them. Rip 'em up. You've got the stuff, and you can do it if you will."

"We'll do it, sir," promised Garry.

"They'll think a cyclone struck them," put in Rooster.

"All right, if you insist on the cyclone," and Mr. Phillips smiled. "But a fairly stiff gale will do the trick. Go to it now and give them some championship stuff, the same kind that won the flag for Lenox last year."

Lenox kicked off, Knapp sending a long one down the field that Tucker ran back for eight yards before he was downed. The ball was Pawling's on its thirty-yard line. Two line plunges failed to gain for Pawling. Then Tucker punted and the ball was Lenox's on its thirty-three yard line.

A plunge through center netted two yards. Another by Nick through guard and left tackle was good for three more. Rooster, however, was thrown back for a loss of three, and on the next down Scarsdale punted and Dorr ran it back to Pawling's thirty-six-yard line.

The Pawling backs got into their stride now and developed an attack that for a time seemed irresistible. Berry hit the line for six, and in the next try made it six more. Tucker took it through for two and then on a superb pass, Jackson to Dorr, the latter whizzed around right end and dodged through almost the entire Lenox team for a touchdown. Berry kicked the goal and the score was Pawling 7, Lenox 6.

In the twinkling of an eye the situation had been reversed, and the lead of Lenox had gone glimmering. Bedlam reigned in the Pawling section of the stands.

"Pawling! Pawling! Send 'em home bawling."

"You've got them rattled!"

"Make it a massacre!"

"Who said they were champions?"

The Lenox rooters hurled back a stout defiance, but it was almost lost in the uproar that came from the partisans of the home team.

"Looks as though the cyclone got mixed and hit the wrong fellows," muttered Rooster.

"Never mind," replied Garry cheerily. "We're due for the next break. We've just begun to fight. Snap into it."

The rest of the quarter was a seesaw with no material advantage for either team. Lenox had braced, and their line was like a stone wall. Finding attempts here were fruitless, Pawling resorted to aerial attacks, but most of these were uncompleted. At the very end of the period a punt by Garry sent the ball far into enemy territory and Tucker ran it back to the Pawling thirty-yard line.

Only one quarter remained to play, and Garry spent the minute between periods in bracing up his team.

"Here's the dope, fellows," he said. "It's

a cinch now that Pawling will play for time. All they've got to do is to hold us down and the game is theirs. But it's always a weakness to take the defensive. It's the fellow on offense who wins, the fellow with a punch, the fellow who doesn't know when he's beaten. That's us. We're going in like wildcats. We're going to tear the hide off of them. Are you with me?"

"You bet we are!" went up a roar, inspired by the indomitable spirit of their leader.

As the period opened with the ball in Pawling's possession on its own thirty-yard line, the home team tried two line plunges without effect. Tucker punted to Lenox's twenty-five-yard line. Nick shot through center for six yards, and on the next play, Rooster punted, the ball being partly blocked and going to Pawling on its forty-three-yard line.

Pawling gained three yards on two downs, but fumbled on the next play, and it was Lenox's ball on their thirty-yard line, Lenox being penalized ten yards for offside play.

Back and forth went the ball, each side trying desperately to get possession of it, but neither being able to make any consistent gains once they had it. The time was going fast and every tick of the referee's watch was worth something to Pawling, who had only to retain its present lead to win.

"But we've got to win!" Garry kept muttering to himself. "We've just got to win!"

Lenox got the ball on their own forty-three-yard line, with five minutes left to play.

Garry stiffened.

Walker snapped the ball back to him. Garry tucked it under his arm and tore through Cooper and Wagner, the Pawling right end and tackle, for sixteen yards.

And then began one of the fiercest exhibitions of line plunging that had ever been seen on the grounds of the High School League.

Through the line Garry went again for seven. Another plunge netted him eight with almost the whole Pawling team piled up on him.

Garry was playing like one possessed. His blood was up. He was fighting like a tiger. And the Lenox stands were shaking now with the roars of the excited rooters.

Once more Garry took the ball, and, with his linesmen giving him superb help, went through for six more.

The Pawling boys were clearly rattled.

"Lenox! Lenox! Len, Len, Len!
We licked them once,
We'll lick them again!
Lenox! Lenox! Len, Len, Len!"

The chant came to Garry like a bugle call and

cleared his swimming brain. Lenox was calling to him. Lenox was depending on him.

Again Garry took the ball and hit the line like a thunderbolt. It bent, buckled and broke, and the fighting Lenox quarterback went through for eleven.

He was sore, bruised, and dizzy. One eye was nearly closed by the roughing he had got in his repeated plunges. But through the other eye he could see the Pawling goal now only nine yards away.

Could he make it? He *must* make it! And he must make it quickly, for the time was getting terribly short.

"Back me up, fellows!" he panted to his linesmen. "For the love of Pete, back me up!"

Into the line he plunged once more with a fury that would not be denied. On and on he bored, panting, gasping, twisting, dodging, and went over the Pawling line for a touchdown!

## CHAPTER X

### Mysterious Happenings

When the pile was untangled, Garry Grayson rose to his feet with all the breath knocked out of him. He stood there gasping while Rooster kicked the goal, making the score 13 to 7 in favor of Lenox.

Before the ball could again be put in play the referee's whistle blew and the game was over.

The Pawling team, game in defeat, lined up and cheered the victors, who responded in kind, and then the boys broke for the clubhouse to escape the throng that swarmed down on the field from the Lenox section, intent on mauling and pounding their heroes. Garry was caught up in the swirl and carried round the field on the shoulders of his hilarious schoolmates, who only relinquished him reluctantly at the door of the clubhouse.

Once inside, Garry was the center of congratulations from his comrades on the team, who were frenzied with joy.

"Gee, Garry, how did you do it?" asked Nick, clapping him on the back.

"You went through that whole Pawling team like a knife through butter!" exclaimed Rooster.

"They couldn't have stopped him with an axe," jubilated Tom Allison, as he reeled off some steps of a snake dance. "It wasn't football; it was magic."

Mr. Phillips was less demonstrative than Garry's comrades, but his face was radiant with satisfaction as he put his hand on Garry's shoulder.

"Well done, Grayson," he said cordially. "That was the finest example of line bucking I've ever seen outside of a college game. It took nerve and determination of a high order, and you deserve the thanks of the school."

For several days after the game with Pawling Garry and his mates went around in a mood of exaltation. They had got the jump on the season by winning the first game. They were confident of other victories to come. There was not a cloud in their sky.

Then things began to happen, mysterious things that disturbed both teachers and students and filled the school with a vague unrest.

One morning Professor Blythe entered his orderly classroom to be confronted with a piece

of malicious mischief that filled him with indignation.

A large map of the ancient Roman Empire hung along one side of the room. It was a fine and costly one, and was known to be highly prized by the Latin teacher.

Over the face of the map were large blotches of ink, obscuring the names of cities and outlines of countries. The miscreants, whoever they were, had done their work thoroughly. The costly map was ruined.

The excitement attendant upon this act of vandalism had scarcely abated when another sensation claimed the attention of the school. Several electric fans had been taken apart and essential parts had been spirited away, leaving the devices useless.

Mr. Allen, the principal, called a special assembly of all the students of the school and voiced a strong warning to the boys and girls under his control.

"This atrocious conduct must stop—and shall," he finished impressively. "Any student who injures or tampers with property belonging to the school is no better than a thief. Lenox has never tolerated and never will tolerate acts of malicious mischief. The offenders, when discovered, will be dealt with as they deserve."

After practice on the field that afternoon,

Rooster, Bill and Garry strolled out for a walk in the country adjoining Lenox to discuss the recent and unpleasant developments at the school.

"It's got to a point where everybody suspects his neighbor," remarked Rooster.

"I only hope whoever's at the root of the trouble will take warning and stop in time," observed Garry thoughtfully. "These practical jokers think they're smart, but after all they're only nitwits."

"Talking about jokes, look at that poor old cow," said Rooster, pointing toward a field they were just passing. "I'll bet anything she thinks the joke's on her."

Dusk was falling thickly. Bill and Garry followed the direction of Rooster's pointing finger, but it was Garry who first discerned what he meant.

"Poor old bossy!" he laughed. "Her gate had been blocked up by some fallen rails and she can't get home. Listen to her moo."

"Wants to be milked," said Bill, climbing the fence and jumping into the pasture, with Rooster and Garry at his heels.

The cow welcomed their coming with a deep, pleading moo. They could see that the beast was suffering, for it was long past milking time.

"We'll get you out of your trouble in a jiffy, old girl," promised Garry. So he and

his mates set to work and soon had the passage cleared.

The cow mooed gratefully and lumbered on her way, while the boys turned back to the road. As they did so, they saw three figures flit by in the dusk.

There was something familiar about those three figures, enveloped though they were in the semi-gloom. But when the boys reached the highway the road was clear before them as far as they could see.

"They've disappeared in a hurry," remarked Rooster. "I could have sworn that fellow on the outside was Sandy Podder. Walked like him, sort of a lazy slouch, hands in pockets, and now he and the fellows with him have done the vanishing act."

"Easy enough to be mistaken about identity in the dusk like this," said Garry carelessly. "Likely enough it wasn't Sandy at all."

"Speaking of that gink reminds me," put in Bill, and he went on to tell them of the conversation he had heard a few days before near the Stewarts' garage.

"I was as sore as a boil that I couldn't get on to what they were cooking up," he said, "but Lent's mother came along and I had to beat it. Whatever it was, Sandy seemed to be pretty sure it would work. Sandy said it was a pip."

"A pip?" laughed Garry. "All his schemes are pips to Sandy. It's only when he tries to put them in practice that they fall down. I guess this last one will meet the fate of all the others."

He might not have been so carefree had he known that Sandy Podder, Lent Stewart, and Chat Johns were at that very moment within earshot. As Garry and his chums passed an old deserted barn at the side of the road, the three plotters peered around a corner of it, grinning gloatingly. Inspiration had come to Garry's enemies, and they were about to make the most of it. Meanwhile, all unsuspecting, Garry, Bill, and Rooster wended their way home to good suppers and later a dreamless night's sleep.

Arriving at school the next morning, they entered their Latin room to find pandemonium broke loose.

Boys were laughing, shouting, jumping on desks to get a better look at the creature that undeniably held the center of the stage. This, Garry ascertained a moment later, was a cow, a great sleek meek-eyed cow!

"Jumping Jupiter!" cried Rooster. "How did that get here?"

"She came to pay us a morning call," replied Tom Allison, spying his friends and elbowing his way toward them.

"We're going to take her out on the campus and have fresh milk for lunch," added Pete Maddern, with a grin. "Get your tin cups ready, boys."

"But how did she get here?" asked Garry bewilderedly.

"That's what I should like to know," said a grim voice in the doorway.

The voice belonged to Mr. Blythe, and the students scattered before his indignant approach.

They formed such a comical contrast, the soft-eyed, bewildered cow and the grim, wrathful man as they exchanged look for look, that laughter broke in a wave over the room.

Mr. Blythe turned fiercely upon the boys.

"This is no laughing matter," he cried. "I am sorry that any student of mine finds it so. It is an outrage and shall be reported at once to the principal."

"The cow or the outrage?" Rooster whispered to Garry, but the latter nudged him to be silent.

"Old Blythe's on the rampage," he warned. "Better lie low."

"Take this animal outside," commanded the teacher irately. "Drive her out! Drive her out! Shoo!"

Again laughter assailed the boys. It doubled them up until they were breathless and weak

from glee. However, at another stern command from the teacher some of them got behind the animal, some of them before, in an attempt to urge the cow from this unfamiliar stamping ground.

But bossy was scared now, and hard to move. Garry finally had an idea. He went out to the campus and returned with a handful of grass. Amid much hilarity he lured the animal inch by inch, step by step toward the front door.

The progress was marked by great pomp and ceremony, fully half the students of the school watching it while they howled with laughter. Order was for a time completely suspended and chaos reigned.

Arrived at the front door, the cow refused to go further, even for the tempting fodder in Garry's hand. It was necessary, therefore, for some half dozen boys to get behind and push.

"Step on the accelerator," cried a wag, and again there was a gleeful outburst.

Urged on irresistibly, the reluctant creature finally stepped out into the open. She had scarcely appeared there before a wrathful farmer came rushing up, declaring that he had searched over half of Lenox for his property. He took charge of the cow and led her off.

Once more back in their classrooms, the "joke" assumed more serious proportions. With the cow removed, the boys could see that

this incident of the animal's appearance in the schoolhouse had probably been conceived and carried out by the same mischief-makers who had ruined Mr. Blythe's map and tampered with the electric fans.

"There's bound to be a big row over this," predicted Bill, as he and Garry were selecting the books they would need for the morning period. "Mr. Allen won't let this pass. He'll probably make a thorough investigation, and if he finds the fellows who planted that cow here, I feel sorry for them, that's all."

Bill Sherwood was right about the course the principal would take. Mr. Blythe entered an indignant protest at the office, and Mr. Allen promised to discover and punish the offenders if such a thing were possible.

"I will question each pupil separately," he declared, "and I am confident I shall have a clue to the rascals before school closes this afternoon."

This he did, beginning with the lower classes and progressing steadily towards the higher grades.

It was a long and tedious business, but it was evident to the least observant of the students that Mr. Allen was in deadly earnest about the matter and determined to get at the root of it.

About mid-morning the principal entered Garry's class. When it came to the latter's

turn to be questioned he answered in a straightforward manner that he knew nothing about how the cow happened to be in the classroom that morning. The same answer was given as regarded the map and the fans.

Rooster, Bill, Nick, and Ted answered in the same way, as did all the other boys in that class.

"I am forced to take your word in this matter," said the principal, when the questioning was over. "But if I find that any of you have deceived me or have withheld information that might lead to the detection of the boys I seek, the punishment meted out to you will be far more severe than I had originally intended. Is there any one of you—" he paused and looked sternly about the attentive class—"who remembers something he would like to say to me."

There was dead silence. Mr. Allen spoke to the teacher in a low tone and went from the room.

Thus he went from class to class until he reached the junior grades. In these were included Sandy Podder and Lent Stewart.

The principal's examination, so far vain, took on an added impetus when he questioned Sandy Podder.

"Do you know anything of this, Podder?" Mr. Allen asked, almost perfunctorily.

Sandy hesitated. The hesitation was noticed and the class became immediately interested.

"Why—I—I—don't know anything very certain, Mr. Allen," Sandy said, with apparent reluctance.

The worried frown on the principal's face deepened.

"Tell me what you do know," he commanded.

"Why, it's—it's only that I happened to see some boys with a cow last night." Sandy spoke still more reluctantly, as though the facts were being drawn from him against his will.

"You did?" The principal's look became interested, intent. "Can you give me the names of those boys?"

"Why, I hardly know. I couldn't be sure. You see, it was nearly dark—"

"But you think you know the names of those boys, don't you?" Mr. Allen interrupted abruptly. "Speak out, Podder. I must know the truth."

"Well, then," replied Sandy, still with well-simulated reluctance, "I heard those boys talk, and I am sure that one of them was Garry Grayson."

## CHAPTER XI

### Under Suspicion

At the mention of Garry Grayson's name there was a startled murmur among the students. Mr. Allen was himself surprised, but kept an impassive face. He looked closely at Sandy Podder.

"Did you recognize any of the other boys that you say were with Grayson?" he asked.

"I think Bill Sherwood and Rooster Long were with him," Sandy returned, still with the air of having these things wrung from him. "Though of course," apologetically, "as I said before, it was impossible for us to tell exactly."

"Us," said the principal sharply. "Then there were others with you when you made this discovery.

Sandy nodded, and under the gravity of his expression lurked a smirk of triumph.

"Lent Stewart, of the Lenox High boys, and Chatwood Johns, one of the boys of the town," he said.

Lent Stewart, being in the classroom, was questioned immediately. Of course he upheld

Sandy's statement. He could not be sure, but he thought that the boys with Grayson were Bill Sherwood and Rooster Long. But as regards Garry, he was reasonably certain, for he had recognized his voice.

"You say they were seen with a cow," the principal went on. "What were they doing with it?"

"We didn't stay to see," replied Sandy, still reluctantly. "But it looked as though they were leading it somewhere."

"H'm!" The principal stood for a while in deep thought. Then he looked at Sandy from beneath level brows. "Is that all you have to tell me?"

"Yes, sir," answered Sandy, with apparent frankness. "That's all."

"And it's enough," he said to himself, as, with a resolute gesture, the principal turned away. "If that swell-headed Garry Grayson and his friends don't get what's coming to them, I miss my guess. Old Allen's fighting mad."

But here Sandy was wrong. Mr. Allen was not fighting mad. Instead he was sad and sorely worried.

He had known Garry since the latter was a baby. He knew something of the splendid records the lad had made both in his studies and on the athletic field. He knew Rooster

Long and Bill Sherwood also as clean, straight-shooting lads, who had up to that time been a credit to Lenox High. It seemed impossible that boys like these could be guilty of the malicious mischief that had set the whole school by the ears and seriously interfered with discipline.

And yet he knew—none better—that at a certain age boys were apt to mistake lawless practical joking for legitimate humor. Their judgment was not yet fully formed. Youthful effervescence had to be reckoned with. It might be so in the case of Garry and his friends, and it was his duty to question them and try to get to the bottom of the matter.

When Garry, Bill, and Rooster were summoned to the principal's office they wondered somewhat at the summons, but were not seriously alarmed. But the principal's first question warned them that there was something in the wind.

"I have heard that you three boys were seen in a pasture on the outskirts of Lenox last night," Mr. Allen began without preface. "Is that true?"

"We certainly were in a pasture just about dark last evening," Garry replied frankly. "But whether any one saw us there or not we can't tell. Some people, though, passed us on the road."

Mr. Allen looked at the boys steadily for a moment, and then asked with significant emphasis.

"What were you doing with the cow you found in the pasture?"

A glance of amazement passed between the boys, a look not lost on Mr. Allen.

"Her gate was closed up," Bill answered quickly. "We opened it so that the cow could get through."

"It was long past milking time and the cow wanted to go home," added Rooster.

"H'm!" said Mr. Allen thoughtfully. "Then you admit that you were in a pasture with a cow last night. Why is it that you did not tell me about that when I questioned you earlier in the day?"

"I suppose because we didn't think it was important," replied Garry. "You asked us whether we knew how the cow got into the Latin room, and we told you the truth."

"Do you say again that you don't know who brought the cow to the classroom?" asked Mr. Allen, looking at them keenly.

"On our word of honor we don't know any more about that than you do, sir," replied Garry earnestly, and Bill and Rooster nodded their acquiescence.

"That will do for the present." The words were accompanied by a gesture of dismissal.

Feeling the futility of making any further attempts at defense, the boys had no alternative but to leave the office. They were under a cloud, and they knew it. While they smarted under a sense of injustice, they asked themselves and each other who could have told Mr. Allen of that innocent incident of their being with the cow the evening before.

Innocent it surely was, prompted purely by their kindness of heart. But they were acutely conscious that it had been extremely unfortunate that the day before the cow appeared in the classroom they had been seen with a cow in the pasture.

"Not guilty, but how can we prove it?" asked Rooster disconsolately.

"Who told Mr. Allen that we were there?" pondered Bill.

"You fellows are thick," declared Garry. "Sandy Podder is the answer."

The others nodded a quick assent.

Those three boys, only half seen through the dusk! Rooster thought he had recognized Sandy Podder. Now in the light of after events, the boys were sure he had. Who but Sandy Podder or one of his cronies would care to implicate them by reporting their whereabouts the evening before? Any one else passing along the road would have seen, despite

the dusk, that their business there was simple enough.

A little later their suspicion was confirmed when on the dismissal of the classes, they learned of the principal's interrogation of Sandy and Lent and the answers they had given.

"Pretended to be awfully sorry that he had to give his evidence, too," reported Ollie Scarsdale, who was in the same grade with Sandy. "Yet I saw him grinning afterward and whispering to Lent Stewart. He thinks he's got you in Dutch all right."

"There's Sandy's pip," remarked Bill later, when the boys were discussing the matter among themselves.

"It's a dirty put-up job!" cried Rooster hotly.

"Of course it is," agreed Garry. "He and Stewart thought they saw a chance to get us in bad by producing circumstantial evidence, and you can trust them not to overlook a chance like that. Oh, if we hadn't taken that walk last night! As it is, we've played right into their hands!

"Anyway, we know, if no one else does, that we didn't bring the cow into the school," he continued, trying to put as cheerful a face as possible on the matter. "They can't prove something on us that we didn't do."

If he could have known that even as he was speaking, Mr. Allen was reading an anonymous note that had been dropped mysteriously on his desk while he was out of the room, Garry might have found his determined cheerfulness severely shaken.

For these are the words that Mr. Allen read over and over again, his brow wrinkled in anxious thought:

"This note is written in the interest of Lenox High. If you want to know who spattered the map, spoiled the fans, and took the cow into the school, ask Grayson, Sherwood and Long. They know."

The note was typewritten on ordinary paper and bore no signature. There was absolutely no clue to the writer.

Contemptuous as he usually was of all anonymous documents, the message impressed the principal in spite of himself.

"If those three boys are guilty, I'll find evidence of it," he said to himself, with a grim tightening of his lips. "This nonsense has gone far enough."

But it seemed that the "nonsense" was to go still farther.

An anonymous letter was published in the next morning's edition of the town paper. It

was a venomous missive and alleged that "wild parties" were occasionally staged at Lenox High. It was hinted also that it might be worth the while of any one sufficiently interested to examine the desks of the some of the students in the school.

The paper went on to say that, although usually averse to publishing anonymous communications, recent acts of vandalism in the high school seemed to justify it in making an exception of this case.

"Lenox High has hitherto enjoyed an enviable reputation," the article added. "It is sincerely hoped by the citizens of Lenox that those who are attempting to tarnish that reputation may soon be brought to book. In our opinion, no zeal should be spared toward the accomplishment of this end."

Wrathfully Mr. Allen read the article. His administration of the school that far had been very successful. He was responsible for its management. If the things that were hinted at proved to be true, it would be a serious reflection on the discipline of the school.

Upon reaching the office he at once wrote a note and sent it around to all the teachers, instructing them to search the desk of each pupil personally and report to him at once.

The order was carried out at once, and with astonishing results.

In the desks of Garry Grayson, Bill Sherwood and Rooster Long three squat flasks were found, hip flasks, each containing a small amount of liquor! No other desk offered anything incriminating.

The hapless trio were thunder-struck. The other members of their class were utterly bewildered. They could not believe it; did not want to believe it. Yet there was the evidence, those three evil smelling flasks with their wretched contents. The evidence seemed overwhelming.

"We're done!" groaned Bill, after class had been dismissed and they were awaiting with dread a summons to the office. "We've been framed, all right, and I only wish I could get hold of the fellow who did it."

"We've got to think how to get out of this jam first," said Garry. "Keep still, fellows, and let me think."

## CHAPTER XII

### Out of the Game

All of Garry Grayson's thinking promised to be of little use at this juncture. The net of circumstantial evidence closed tightly about him and his friends, and try as he did he could find no way out of it.

Their friends—and they were many—were loyally with them, but since they could not explain away the strong evidence of those hip flasks, their friendship was of little practical assistance.

Mr. Allen, put on his mettle by that article in the morning paper and furious to find the unpleasant insinuations in it substantiated by what seemed substantial proof, permitted the full weight of his wrath to fall upon the helpless lads.

He listened grimly to their protestations of innocence. Then he announced his verdict. The three were to be suspended, summarily barred from Lenox High for three months, as a warning to the other students of the school.

It was a terrible blow to the boys. Naturally

it was very disturbing to their parents, who were firmly convinced that their sons were being wronged. They went to Mr. Allen and urged that the sentence be modified, at least until the boys could have a chance to unravel the plot they felt had been woven about them.

More than this, most of the teachers of the school in conference with their superior privately advised leniency, especially in view of the unspotted records of the boys up to that time. Mr. Phillips was especially urgent in asking for a lighter sentence. He admitted the weight of the evidence was against them, but assured Mr. Allen that nevertheless he was convinced that the boys were innocent and that in due time that innocence would be established.

By this time the principal's wrath had cooled somewhat; his certainty of their wrongdoing was wavering; his own liking for the accused boys reasserted itself; and he finally agreed to revoke his order of suspension.

However—and this was almost as much a blow to the boys as actual suspension—the final punishment meted out by Mr. Allen barred the lads from all participation in athletic games for the rest of the term.

"I'd rather be suspended!" burst out Rooster savagely. "Can you imagine sitting on the sub bench and watching Lenox lose?"

"Wake up, feller, you're dreaming," growled

Bill. "You don't suppose we'll get as far as the sub bench, do you? We've been barred from the field altogether, except as spectators in the stands."

"Even the humble sub has it all over us," muttered Garry bitterly. "I've tried to be cheerful about this, but it certainly looks as though we were licked at last."

"Say, Garry, where do you get that stuff?" said Nick Danter, in an attempt to cheer up his chum. "You won't be licked until you're dead. We'll find a way to get you and Bill and Rooster back on the gridiron some way! Suffering cats!" he added angrily, "I wish old Allen were further. How does he expect we're going to win against Thomaston and the game only a few days off? Without you, we're sure to lose."

"Oh, no, you're not." With difficulty Garry raised himself from the depths of gloom. "You're not beaten till you think you are, Nick. It's your job and the job of the other fellows on the team to go in and win despite the handicap. You see, Rooster and I are conceited enough to call it a handicap," he added, with a sorry attempt at a grin.

"Can't be done, Garry! Can't be done!" declared Nick moodily. "Not at such short notice, anyhow. You know we expect a hard fight against Thomaston under any conditions.

Their team is mighty strong. They've lost hardly any of their old stars through graduation. And as far as our team is concerned, with you and Rooster counted out, the boys are in for an awful slump. I don't believe that anything Mr. Phillips can do will pull them out of it."

"Just the same, if any one can, Mr. Phillips will!" exclaimed Garry, brightening at mention of the English teacher. "There's one fine man! He doesn't believe we did any of the things charged against us."

"Neither does any one else in the school, if the truth were told," asserted Ted. "I don't think Mr. Allen himself really believes it. He has to keep discipline though, and in the face of the circumstantial evidence against you he had to do something."

When the day came for the game with Thomaston, which was to take place on the Lenox grounds, Garry, Rooster, and Bill thought at first that they would not go at all. But the call of the gridiron was too strong to be resisted. They could at least cheer for the old team, even if they could not play on it.

Their entrance into the stands was attended with an ovation on the part of their fellow students that warmed their hearts. Hands were thrust out to grasp theirs and many were the words of sympathy spoken. Most of the stu-

dents were almost as sore as Garry himself at his banishment from the game, and with him out they could see nothing but defeat for Lenox.

Their gloomy anticipations were fulfilled to the uttermost, for that afternoon Lenox went down to the worst defeat it had experienced since it had been a member of the league.

With Garry gone, his former mates were like a ship without a rudder. Mr. Phillips had done the best he could to strengthen the team. Pete Maddern had been put in Rooster's place and Benny Knapp had taken Garry's, while Rankin had been called on to fill Knapp's place in the backfield. It was the best that could be done under the circumstances, but it was not good enough to avert an overwhelming defeat.

For Benny got mixed in his signals, often with fatal results. The whole team became confused, not knowing what to expect from their leader. Thomaston took full advantage of the mistakes and made the game a massacre.

Only once did Lenox score, when the Thomaston fullback fumbled and Nick scooped up the ball and went over the line for a touchdown. But Thomaston scored almost at will. They rode easily to victory while Lenox was smothered at every turn.

Six times Thomaston battered its way through the line for touchdowns. When they wearied of this, they resorted to the aerial

game, while the Lenox overhead defense collapsed. Four times Thomaston scored through the air on two passes of fifty yards each, one of fifty-four and a fourth of twenty-seven.

Under this fierce attack the entire Lenox team became like a mass of huddled sheep. The game had become a joke. When at last the referee's whistle sounded an end to the slaughter, Thomaston had triumphed by a score of 63 to 6.

The Lenox rooters sat through it all, glum and dumbfounded, while the Thomaston supporters chortled with glee. Lenox had taken a shameful beating.

Sick at heart, Garry watched his chance, and when his comrades were not looking slipped away by himself. He was in no mood for conversation. He wanted to be alone in his misery until he could get a grip on himself. To have to sit there and watch his team lose! To feel without conceit that in ten minutes on the field he could have turned the tide of battle! To know this, and yet to sit there in silent agony seeing the team disgraced! It was more than he could bear.

Wandering along blindly, his head full of unhappy thoughts, Garry heard himself suddenly accosted. The voice was a familiar one and, looking up, Garry saw Cal Yates' car parked at the curb. Cal was grinning at him amiably.

"What's the matter that you can't recognize an old friend," chirped Cal. "Come on, jump in and we'll go for a ride."

Garry hesitated, was about to refuse, then suddenly acquiesced. He liked Cal Yates and hardly cared to offend him by refusing the invitation. Then, too, it would be a change and might drive away some of the gloom that enwrapped him.

As Garry put a leg over the car door and slumped down in the seat beside him, Cal regarded him slily out of the corner of his eye.

"Think I can guess the reason for your doleful dumps," Cal said with a jerk of his head back toward the field. "I was at the game. Thomaston certain walked all over you."

Garry nodded glumly.

"My hands were tied," he said. "Rooster and I had to sit there and watch them get licked."

"Pretty tough!" murmured Cal sympathetically.

There was a moment of silence while the car purred rhythmically along the road. Then Cal spoke suddenly and with a resolution not familiar to him.

"See here," he blurted out. "I like you, and I've reason to be grateful to you for what you did for my dad when he needed help.

Besides, I don't like to see a fellow framed."

Garry looked at him curiously.

Cal was silent again as he manipulated the car about a corner and swung off on a road leading into the country. Here he slowed the car to an ambling pace and turned half about to face Garry.

"Because that's what you've been," he said, continuing from the point where he had left off. "Framed!"

"Don't I know it?" Garry spoke bitterly. "We fellows never had hip flasks, never even thought of them until they were found in our desks. If that isn't framing, what is?"

Cal pondered a moment.

"I don't like to mix in any one else's business," he said slowly. "But—" He paused.

"If you know anything, spill it," urged Garry eagerly.

"I will," said Cal briskly. "I'll tell you when and where you were framed and who did it!"

## CHAPTER XIII

### Tracing the Threads

Garry Grayson's heart gave such a bound that it almost seemed to turn over.

"Tell me! Tell me!" he cried.

"That interests you, does it?" returned Cal, with grin. "I thought it would. Now listen, Garry, and I'll tell you what I know about this.

"I was out with some of my friends a short time ago," he went on. "We stopped at a road-house for a bite to eat. Sandy Podder, Lent Stewart, and another fellow I didn't know were sitting at a table near us. The whole bunch of them had hip flasks—"

Garry uttered an involuntary exclamation, and Cal glanced at him quizzically.

"Yeah," he continued, "and by the time we had finished dinner that bunch was pretty wild. When we got up to go we saw the landlord of the place go and join Sandy and his bunch at their table. They began talking in a low voice so that we couldn't hear anything they said, except here and there a word.

"After we got out to the car, I found that I

had left my cap behind and went back for it. Here's where the interesting part comes in."

Cal paused and watched the road thoughtfully for a few seconds where it turned and twisted before them.

"For the love of Pete, go on!" cried Garry.

"I'm coming to it," grinned Cal. "Well, you see by this time it was pretty late, and there was no one in the dining room of the place but Podder and his gang—"

"And the landlord," put in Garry.

"And the landlord," repeated Cal gravely. "He's a very important person in the tale, as you'll see. As I opened the door I happened to hear your name mentioned. You see they thought they were alone and were not so careful to keep their voices lowered.

" 'We'll plant the flask in Garry Grayson's desk,' I heard Sandy say.

" 'And in Rooster Long's and Bill Sherwood's too,' said Stewart. 'Might as well make a good job while we're about it.'

" 'It will be kissing good-bye to three flasks and a pint of good liquor,' said Sandy, grinning foolishly, 'but we won't grudge 'em that, will we, fellows?' "

Gary's hands clenched until the nails bit into the palms.

"Go on!" he cried.

"Well, that's about all," said Cal. "I went

in and got my cap, and they looked at me as if I were some sort of a crook—"

"The dirty crooks themselves!" muttered Garry, scowling.

"You said it," agreed Cal cheerfully. "I didn't think much about it—supposed, in fact, that the fellows were so fuddled they didn't know what they were doing and that nothing would come of it until I heard in a roundabout way that you fellows were accused of some sort of tomfoolery in school. Then when I found that you'd been barred from athletics because of those hip flasks that had been planted in your desks—well, I felt it was about time that little Cal stepped in and told what he knew."

"Say, Cal, I don't know how I can thank you for this!" Garry's face was radiant and his eyes gleamed with sudden determination. "I've got to get this thing to Mr. Allen right away."

Cal nodded.

"Mr. Allen may not think my story is proof enough. He knows, or can find out, that I'm friendly with you because of the way you helped my father, and he may think I'm just cooking this up to get a pal out of trouble. I've thought of that, and so I'm going to help you to corroborate my evidence."

"How's that?" asked Garry eagerly.

"I'm going to take you right now to the

roadhouse and try to scare the landlord into telling what he knows about this plot."

"Do you suppose he'll do it?" asked Garry.

"He won't want to do it. I know that much," replied Cal. "But I think I can put a flea in his ear that will make him be good. At any rate, I'm going to try it."

"Good!" exclaimed Garry, all his despondency gone. Hope coursed through his veins like wine. Every moment's delay seemed unbearable to him.

"You're a friend worth having, Cal," he cried jubilantly. "And now you wouldn't mind stepping on the gas a bit, would you?"

Cal laughed and complied.

"Eager on the scent now, aren't you? Thought maybe you'd be when you'd heard my story. But the place isn't far off and we'll be there in a jiffy."

So saying, Cal Yates turned a curve in the road, skidding merrily on two wheels.

There was a yell of fright, and three burly tramps stepped to one side with surprising quickness.

Cal turned to the scowling men.

"Sorry," he called out. "Didn't see you coming. Glad I didn't hit you. S'long!"

For answer, one of the tramps picked up a big stone and hurled it at the car, but the speed at which it was going disturbed the

fellow's aim, and the car went by undamaged.

"Surly brute, isn't he?" asked Cal indignantly. "Any one might think we were trying to run him down on purpose. If that stone had hit one of us, it sure would have done some damage."

They had gone a few hundred feet further when something went wrong with the car. Cal drew it up by the roadside and got down to investigate. A few moments went by. Then came a sharp cry from Garry.

"Look out!" he called.

Cal looked up just in time see a stick in the hands of one of the tramps who had followed them descending toward his head. He dodged, and the tramp, almost overbalanced by missing his stroke, stumbled forward, and in the attempt to save himself dropped the stick.

Instantly Cal picked it up and gave the man a poke with it in the pit of his stomach. The man doubled up and sat down promptly, gasping for breath and with all the fight knocked out of him for the moment.

Simultaneously with his cry of warning to Cal, Garry had jumped from the car. As he did so, the other two tramps rushed toward him.

Against the three of them it would have fared hard with the boys if at that moment a car full of schoolboys who had been to the game had not

swept around the bend of the road. They took in the unequal struggle in an instant, stopped the car and swarmed down from it.

At these unexpected reinforcements the tramps, seeing themselves much outnumbered, made off at good speed, never once stopping to look behind them.

The newcomers, who took it all as a lark, shouted lustily and pursued the fleeing rascals until the latter were lost in the woods near by. Then they returned, waved aside laughingly the thanks of Garry and Cal, jumped into their waiting car and sped away.

Garry turned to Cal, grinning and wiping the dust from his clothes.

"That was a lucky interruption for us," he said.

"Surest thing you know," agreed Cal.

They resumed their trip, and before long drew up at a roadhouse that stood a little back from the highway.

"Ready for the next act?" asked Cal.

"More than ready—eager," returned Garry.

They went quietly around to a side door of the building. Cal appeared to know his way about very well.

"The eats are good here," he explained, "and I've often dropped in when I've been coming home from a spin. Only for the eats though, for I never touch anything stronger

than tea or coffee for liquid refreshment."

"Don't seem to be doing much business now," volunteered Garry, as he looked about.

"The dinner crowd hasn't begun to come yet," replied Cal. "It's a good time to find Jake unoccupied. Come on. I think I'll know where to locate him."

Jake, Garry conjectured, was the proprietor of the place.

Cal opened the side door with an air of assurance and stepped into a large kitchen. The cook and two helpers were already busied with preparations for dinner. Cal greeted them jovially.

"Want a word with Jake in private, Jerry," he said, and favored the cook with a wink. "Where shall I find him?"

Jerry, a big fat man with a chef's hat on his head, jerked the hat toward a door at the further end of the kitchen.

"In his office. Go on in. He's always glad to see old customers."

Cal crossed the kitchen swiftly, Garry at his side.

He swung open a door, crossed a small passageway, then opened another door.

Tilted back in his chair with his feet on a desk sat a fat, greasy, little man with an expression of lazy contentment on his face.

As Cal and Garry stepped into the room the

man made as though to rise, but Cal waved him back with a careless gesture.

"Don't get up, Jake," he said,. "This is a friend of mine, Garry Grayson." A nod of his head indicated Garry. "We've come to make a little call, Jake, but we won't stay more than a few minutes. How's business?"

"Great!" The greasy little man indicated two chairs, one on either side of the desk, and waved his guests into them. "Effery day ve got a crowd vould make you sit up und take notice. Eet is such a pleasure to see how der people like my liddle place. Bisness gets better effery day."

"That's good. Nice little place you have here, Jake," said Cal gravely. "You must be pretty well attached to it by this time."

"Sure, I like my liddle place. I build it up myself und make of it a bisness what pulls in der money hand over fist. Sure, I like it."

"And in that case, of course," Cal said carelessly, but watching the proprietor as a cat does a mouse, "it would break your heart to have it closed up, wouldn't it, Jake?"

The eyes of the little man narrowed suddenly until they seemed mere slits in his greasy face. Slowly he removed his feet from the desk, his eyes holding Cal's.

"What foolishment iss you talking?" he demanded coldly.

"Now listen, Jake." Cal assumed an easy air as he bent over the desk, one elbow resting on it. "We, Garry Grayson and I, want this to be just a friendly little chat. It's your fault if it takes an unfriendly turn. That right, Garry?"

Garry nodded. His eyes had narrowed too. He was watching the man behind the desk intently.

"So, Jake, that being understood, suppose we come down to cases," continued Cal lightly.

"Vot you mean by cases?" asked Jake, with symptoms of growing belligerence. "Vot iss it you vant of me?"

"Something very simple, Jake; very simple." Cal's tone was soothing. "Garry Grayson here finds himself in a jam, so to speak, a nasty mess, and all along of some hip flasks that were planted in the desks of him and two of his chums. This dirty trick was pulled by a couple of fellows who hate him and want to run him out of the Lenox High school. You know those fellows, Jake. They come here often."

"Vell," replied Jake guardedly. "Vot if they do?"

"Because," explained Cal, "the dirty work of these fellows has caused Garry Grayson and two of his friends to be barred from athletics in the school. It has put them in Dutch. Now,

I like these boys a lot, Jake, and I'm not going to stand by and see them framed. I happen to know who framed them, and I happen to know that you know too. With your help, Jake, I'm going to show up those fellows for what they are."

"Mit my help, yes?" queried Jake, in a soft voice. "I dink nod. I do not dell on my customers."

"I see," said Cal quietly. "Then you'd rather have your customers tell on you?" As the little man whirled upon him, Cal continued quickly: "Now listen, Jake. I think you're going to help me get Grayson and his friends clear of this mess, and I'll tell you why."

"For vy?" questioned the little man barely above a whisper that suggested the hiss of a snake.

## CHAPTER XIV

### Brought to Book

"Because, Jake, old boy," replied Cal Yates to the man's question, "I happen to know where Sandy Podder and his friends got those hip flasks. And what's more important, oh, much more important, Jake! I know where they got the contents of those flasks and where they or anybody else, if they give the password, can get a lot more of the same stuff whenever they like."

Cal leaned back in his chair and met the furious stare of the little man with a laugh.

"Honest now, Jake," he said, "you wouldn't want me to tell all I know about this place, would you?"

The proprietor's face was a study. It turned a yellowish green. He was clearly flabbergasted.

"I keep a respec'able place," he muttered.

"I grant it's much better than the general run of roadhouses. For one thing, the food is excellent," replied Cal. "But all the same, Jake, none of your customers have been known

to die of thirst. I know what's in the tea cups on the tables. My eyes are good and so is my nose. Now get me right. I've no desire to poke my nose into your business. But I'm out to see justice done to Garry Grayson here, and I'm going to do it if it takes a leg or takes your license."

The greasy face grew still moister with perspiration at the mention of the word "license."

"Und it's me dot thought you vos a friend ov mine," Jake wailed. "Und now you drying to ruin mine bisness."

"Nothing of the kind, Jake," denied Cal. "There are worse fellows than you. I've got some mighty good meals in this place. I'm not asking you to do anything that isn't right. I'm just asking you to help get my friend out of a mess. You know it isn't right that any one should be framed."

"No," admitted Jake, "I vouldn't frame no one mineself. But vot udders do I cannot help. Who iss dis young feller dot I should get mixed up in his drubbles?"

"I'll tell you who he is," replied Cal. "He's the son of a lawyer, Joseph S. Grayson of Lenox. Do you know him?"

"Der vun what sent Gyp Mooney to jail?" exclaimed Jake.

"The same," assented Cal. "And the one

who closed up Gyp's poolroom," he added significantly. "Oh, he's a wonder at closing up places when he gets started. I'd hate to have him close up yours, Jake."

The perspiration now stood in great beads on Jake's brow, and his hands closed and unclosed nervously.

"Listen!" he said. "I vould help dis Grayson, who seems to be a nice young feller, but vot kin I do? Vot do I know about dose hip flasks? I seen dem here, yes. Mine customers bring dem vid dem. But vot does dot prove about der framing?"

"I'll tell you what you know about this particular case," replied Cal. "Sandy Podder and his bunch were in here about a week ago. I'd been having a bite here, and went out when I'd finished. But I had forgotten my cap, and when I came back for it Sandy and his pals were boasting about how they were going to plant hip flasks with liquor in them in the desks of Garry Grayson and his friends. You were sitting at the table with them and heard every word. Now wait a minute, Jake," as the man started to protest. "I see by your eyes that you're going to say you didn't hear them. Take a fool's advice and don't say it. I know you heard them."

The little man sank back in his seat with a groan.

"Vot you want me to do?" he asked.

"Just this," replied Cal, bending forward and tapping the desk impressively. "I'm going with my friend here to Mr. Allen, the principal of the high school. I'm not going to tell him a single word about your selling liquor in this place. But I am going to tell him what I heard Sandy Podder and his pals say about framing Grayson and his friends.

"Now, Mr. Allen may think that, since I'm a friend of Garry's, I'm getting up the whole thing to help him out of a mess. He may want some one else's word to back up mine. Yours is going to be the word to do that."

"I vill be ruint!" groaned Jake.

"Not at all," Cal reassured him. "The whole thing will be kept under our hats. I'll get Mr. Allen's word for that. Your talk with him will be in private. All he wants to know, all he cares to know just now, is the truth about this framing. Once he feels sure of this, he'll call Sandy Podder and his pals in and worm the truth out of them. They're yellow, and each will probably squeal on the other in the hope of being let down easy. But your name will be kept out of it. How about it, Jake? Is it a go?"

Jake nodded his head.

"You haf me by der neck," he said glumly. "I can nudding else do."

"Atta boy!" said Cal rising. "Come along, Garry. We'll just be able to get back to town by dinner time. S'long, Jake."

"Cal, you're a wonder," said Garry, when they were once more seated in the car. "The way you handled that fellow couldn't have been beaten."

"Not so bad, not so bad," chuckled Cal, as he stepped on the gas. "I thought I could make Jake listen to reason. He isn't such a bad old skate at that."

"Well, I can never thank you enough," declared Garry warmly. "You've lifted a thousand tons from my mind."

"More than I ever lifted before," grinned Cal. "I must be a regular strong man. But I'm glad if I've been able to pay in a little way the debt I owe you on account of my father."

"How's he getting along, by the way?" asked Garry, as they sped along at a rapid rate.

"Fine as silk," replied Cal. "He's getting around all right now. Limps a little, but the doctor says that his leg will be just as good as the other one before long."

"That's fine and dandy!" said Garry.

Before long they reached Garry's home. Garry pressed his friend to come in and have dinner with the family, but Cal had another engagement and could not accept the invitation

at that time, though he promised to do so before long.

"Now what about Mr. Allen?" asked Cal, as he prepared to depart. "I suppose you want this thing to be cleared up right off the bat."

"You bet I do!" exclaimed Garry. "I'll see Mr. Allen in the morning and make an appointment, if I can, to see you at his office right after school closes. I'll 'phone you at noon about it. That suit you?"

"Right down to the ground," replied Cal. "Good-bye, old chap, and don't take any bad money. S'long."

The joy in the Grayson family when Garry repeated to them at the table the events of the afternoon can be imagined. They had all been immersed in gloom because of Garry's predicament, had never for an instant doubted his innocence, and had writhed under the sense of bitter injustice.

Now Mrs. Grayson's eyes were full of happy tears as were Ella's, and Mr. Grayson's voice was husky as he threw his arm over the boy's shoulder.

"You've had a hard time of it, my boy," he said, "and I know just how you must have felt. But wrong can't triumph for long, and now you've been vindicated. Let me know when you've made the appointment with Mr. Allen, and I'll run up and join you there."

"Rooster," said Garry the next morning, as he met his chums on the way to school. "How would you like to get back on the eleven?"

"Swell chance!" grunted Rooster.

"Better chance than you think," replied Garry, his eyes dancing.

"What do you mean?" came from the crowd in a chorus, as they gathered about him.

"Never mind what I mean," replied Garry, with a portentous air of mystery.

"Cut out that Sphinx stuff or I'll slug you," cried Bill. "Tell us what you mean!"

"Not yet," laughed Garry happily. "I'm beautiful but dumb."

"Dumb is right," agreed Ted heartily. "The less said about the beauty the better. Be a good fellow, Garry, and spill it."

"Be patient, little ones," retorted Garry aggravatingly. "All in good time. If you behave yourselves, I may let you into a secret, say about five o'clock this afternoon. Until then my lips are sealed."

"Your lips may be split unless you come across," threatened Nick, making a playful pass at him.

But no amount of wheedling could get anything further from Garry, and his chums passed the rest of the school day in wondering what could be the explanation of the mystery. But that it was something good, they felt as-

sured, and that enabled them to possess their souls in more or less patience.

When the morning lessons were over Garry called upon Mr. Allen in the latter's office. The principal was bending over his desk, busy with a mass of reports. He looked up as Garry entered.

"What is it, Garry?" he asked, as he pushed back his papers and slewed his chair around.

"If you please, Mr. Allen," responded Garry, "I would like to make an appointment with you for my father and me to see you here after classes to-day."

"Why, of course," replied Mr. Allen, a little surprised, as he looked at the flushed, eager face of the boy. "Would you mind telling me what it is about?"

"It's about that hip-flask business," responded Garry. "I've found out who put them in my desk, as well as those of Bill Sherwood and Rooster Long."

"You have?" and now it was the principal whose voice was eager.

Mr. Allen had never felt easy in his mind over the penalty inflicted on the accused boys. He did not see how he could have acted other than he had, considering the weight of circumstantial evidence. The discipline of the school had to be maintained. But deep down in his heart he could not believe that Garry Grayson

had lied to him. So his relief at a promised clearing up of the mystery was almost as great as that of the boys themselves.

"Yes, sir," Garry replied to the principal's question.

"Who did it?" asked Mr. Allen. "Anybody connected with the school?"

Garry nodded his head.

"But I wish you wouldn't ask me who they are just now, if you please, Mr. Allen," he said. "I don't want you to take my word for it." Here the principal flushed a little. "I'll let somebody else tell the story. Will it be all right to bring a couple of witnesses with me?"

"Perfectly right," replied Mr. Allen heartily. "And I want to tell you, Garry, that nobody will be more delighted than I if their story clears you of all connection with the matter."

Garry thanked the principal and was off to telephone Cal Yates. The latter was at home, and agreed to go out in his car, get Jake, and bring him along.

Promptly at the appointed time, Garry and his father, together with Cal Yates, were gathered in Mr. Allen's office. Jake was waiting outside, since Cal had promised to secure from Mr. Allen a pledge that Jake's name would be kept out of the matter as far as possible.

"Now, Garry," said Mr. Allen, as he settled

down in his chair, "you have the floor. Bring on your witnesses."

"This is the first one," said Garry, introducing Cal.

The latter plunged at once into the story, telling the facts clearly and convincingly. Mr. Allen was visibly impressed. He put a number of questions, all of which were answered frankly and without the slightest hesitation.

"Now for the other witness," he said.

Then Cal told of the presence of Jake outside and of his anxiety to avoid publicity.

Mr. Allen conferred in low tones with Mr. Grayson, and then gave the required promise. Jake was brought in and, with much twisting and squirming, confirmed Cal's story. He was an unwilling witness, and for that reason his statements carried the more weight.

The next morning a messenger from the principal came into the junior class in Latin and spoke to Mr. Blythe in a whisper.

"Podder and Stewart," announced the Latin teacher, "you will report at once to Mr. Allen in his office!"

## CHAPTER XV

### A Merited Punishment

Sandy Podder and Lent Stewart looked at each other and turned pale. They rose and left the room, followed by curious eyes.

Mr. Allen was alone in his office. He motioned them to seats. Then he sat there, looking from one to the other with glances that seemed to bore them through. They alternately flushed and paled and fidgeted in their seats.

"Podder and Stewart," he suddenly shot at them, "why did you put those hip flasks in the desks of Grayson, Long, and Sherwood?"

It was like the explosion of a bomb. The guilty students jumped convulsively. They tried to speak, but no words came. At last Sandy found his voice.

"Wh-wh-what do you mean, Mr. Allen?" he stammered.

"You know what I mean," thundered Mr. Allen, rising to his feet and towering over them. "Lying is useless. I have the facts. I know the plot from beginning to end. Why did you put those hip flasks in the desks of Gray-

son, Long, and Sherwood? Out with it now! Out with the truth!"

He was so sure, so positive, so unbending, that the boys' hearts turned to water. They quailed before those boring eyes. Their guilty consciences gave them no support. Lies were only broken reeds. In confession seemed to lie their only hope.

Sandy was the first to break.

"It—it was only a joke—" he stuttered.

"A joke!" repeated Mr. Allen with biting scorn. "Then you did do it, Podder? And you too, Stewart?"

The fat was in the fire now, and they nodded their heads, averting meeting the principal's blazing eyes.

"And the bringing of the cow to the classroom, the spattering of the map, and the spoiling of the electric fans," continued Mr. Allen, pressing his advantage relentlessly. "You did that too? Come clean now!"

Sandy and Lent were so wilted that they had no strength for further denial and nodded miserably.

"We weren't the only ones, though," said Sandy, hoping he might gain some immunity by implicating others. "There was Chat Johns and Aleck Anderson."

"Anderson, you say?" said Mr. Allen. "I'll deal with him. Johns is not a member of the

school, and I have no jurisdiction over him."

He sat down, wearied from the strain of his emotions, but infinitely relieved because of having elicited the truth. The guilty consciences of the culprits had been his best helpers, and he had not needed to bring witnesses or thrust Jake's name into the matter.

"So it was a joke, was it?" he said, scathingly. "A joke to weave such a dastardly plot about innocent comrades! A joke to see them punished for something they knew nothing about! A joke to lie to me! Well, it's the last joke you'll play in this school. We have no place here for your peculiar brand of humor. Go!"

They went out like whipped dogs.

Later Mr. Allen sent for Anderson. He was a surly sort of fellow, a member of the football team, but one who had always cherished an envious grudge against Garry Grayson because of the sudden rise of the latter to football prominence. Anderson was a senior, had played for three years with the team, counting the current season, and had fondly hoped that, following the departure of Ralph Wynn, he might be chosen captain. To have Garry, a sophomore, placed over himself, a senior, had galled him to the quick.

"I know everything, Anderson," Mr. Allen said to him curtly, as he entered the office.

"Sandy Podder and Lent Stewart have confessed to their part and yours in planting the hip flasks in the desks of Grayson, Long, and Sherwood. What have you to say for yourself? Think well before you speak."

Utterly taken aback by the suddenness of the attack, confused and flabbergasted, not knowing whether it were safer to deny or to tell the truth, Anderson kept silent, his face as pale as death.

"Silence is confession," remarked Mr. Allen after a moment's pause. "Do you admit it?"

Shamefacedly, Anderson nodded.

"That will do," said Mr. Allen. "You may go."

Ever since the conference of the day before Garry had been besieged by his chums to tell them what he had meant by his cryptic utterances. But Mr. Allen had requested him to say absolutely nothing until he gave him permission. So Garry perforce kept silent, despite all the baiting of his friends.

"Can't do it, fellows," he said. "You'll hear soon enough. But look at my face."

"Why should we have to?" snorted Rooster. "What have we done?"

"Not much to look at," remarked Ted, eying Garry critically.

"Do I look downhearted?" asked Garry, disregarding the gibes. "Am I weeping bitter

tears? All I can tell you is to keep your eyes and ears open. Something's going to break, and you won't be sorry when it does."

Following his interview with Aleck Anderson, Mr. Allen called a conference of his teachers at noon. At the afternoon sessions of the various classes the students were told that they were all to gather in the assembly room to hear a statement by the principal as soon as school work was over for the day.

The pupils poured into the assembly room, buzzing like so many bees, agog with curiosity. But the noise subsided like magic when Mr. Allen came from his office and advanced to the front of the platform.

"I have called you together this afternoon," he said, "to right a wrong and do justice."

He paused for a moment and the silence was almost painful.

Garry's heart gave a bound. Involuntarily his eyes swept the audience. Sandy Podder and Lent Stewart were nowhere to be seen.

"You all know," Mr. Allen went on, "of the recent happenings that have taken place in Lenox High and have brought discredit on the school. Reports have been current of wild parties here. Hip flasks have been found in desks. An animal has been brought into the classroom. A wall map has been bespattered

with ink. The electric fans have been put out of commission.

"Such acts of vandalism could of course not be tolerated. An inquiry was set on foot and circumstantial evidence seemed to point to three boys as guilty. Those boys had always up to that time maintained a good record in the school. But the evidence was strong, and in addition was strengthened by the personal testimony of certain other pupils of the school. No other course seemed open to the officers of the school than to inflict punishment. That punishment consisted in barring them from all athletic activities for the remainder of the term.

"I want to say to you all that that punishment was unjust. Those boys are innocent. Grayson, Long, and Sherwood stand up."

Garry, Rooster, and Bill rose to their feet.

Instantly there was a wild outburst of cheering. Again and again it rose and swelled into a roar that seemed as though it would never stop. The boys who were nearest reached over and pounded the trio on the back, yelling like maniacs. All semblance of order was for the moment abandoned. If Garry, Bill, and Rooster ever had had any doubt as to how they stood with their comrades, they could have none now.

Mr. Allen made no effort to subdue the out-

burst. He stood there smiling and let it run its course. Then when it had subsided he raised his hand for attention.

"I want to tender to you boys, on behalf of the officers of the school," he said, addressing the three, "our heartfelt apologies for the wrong that was done you."

Again wild cheering ensued.

"Now just one word more, and it is with profound regret that I have to say it," went on Mr. Allen, as Garry, Bill, and Rooster, blushing but happy beyond all words, took their seats. "I know not only that these boys are innocent of the charges brought against them, but I know who the guilty ones are. This time there is no doubt. I have their own confessions.

"Had they simply done these things in a spirit of mischief, without seeking to cast the blame on others, it would have been bad enough. Still, that might have been punished by suspension. But they deliberately plotted to involve others in misery and disgrace. For that, the only fit punishment is expulsion.

"Podder, Stewart, and Anderson are no longer pupils of this school."

## CHAPTER XVI

### A Plot in the Making

There was a gasp of surprise and a buzzing as of innumerable bees as Mr. Allen uttered the last fateful words and intimated with a wave of the hand that assembly was dismissed.

Once out of the building, Garry, Bill, and Rooster became the center of an excited throng of schoolmates, who congratulated them and mauled them as they laughingly milled about them.

None were more enthusiastic than the members of the football team, who had been terribly depressed since the Waterloo they had received at the hands of Thomaston. The drubbing they had then suffered had largely taken the heart out of them, and all hope of another championship had been resigned.

Nor had they been at a loss as to the reason for the defeat. Thomaston had been no stronger than Pawling, and yet Lenox had beaten Pawling. But Garry Grayson had led them in the Pawling game, and in the Thomaston game he had been absent. That spelled all

the difference between victory and defeat.

But their joy in Garry's vindication, which of course carried reinstatement on the football team along with it, was tempered somewhat by the loss of Aleck Anderson. Whatever his faults, he had been a strong player at tackle, and his dismissal from the school created a hole that it would be hard to fill.

As for Sandy Podder and Lent Stewart, no sympathy at all was felt for them, except perhaps by a few of their own ilk, of whom some specimens were left in the school.

After the tumult had subsided and most of the boys had dispersed, Mr. Phillips approached Garry, where he stood with a group of his friends, and heartily shook his hand.

"I am more delighted than I can say by your vindication, Grayson, and yours as well, Long and Sherwood," he said. "It simply shows that in the long run right is bound to win. I want to say that never for a moment, even when things looked blackest, have I believed you guilty."

"Thank you, Mr. Phillips," said Garry, while his comrades echoed him. "I've heard how hard you fought to lift my sentence of suspension or have it changed to a lighter one. Even at that, it's been pretty tough to be barred from athletics."

"Tough on the team too," returned Mr. Phil-

lips, with a smile. "But that's all in the past now. The team will take on new life now with you and the others back in their places. We've missed you, Long, at fullback. The only one who won't go back to his position is Sherwood."

There was a moment of consternation at this announcement, and Bill was appalled.

"Why, Bill's been cleared of the charges too!" put in Garry anxiously.

"All the same," said Mr. Phillips soberly, though his eyes twinkled, "he isn't going back to his old place on the scrubs. I want him on the regulars."

"What?" cried Bill, hardly able to believe his ears.

"That's right," rejoined Mr. Phillips. "You'll take Anderson's place at right tackle."

"Glory hallelujah!" cried Garry, fairly hugging big Bill in his delight.

"Think you can fill the place, Sherwood?" asked the coach.

"Gee, I'll try to, Mr. Phillips, and thanks for the chance!" replied Bill. "I'll work my head off, you can bet on that!"

"I believe you," replied Mr. Phillips. "But we'll all have to work our heads off, if we win our next game with Greenfield. Those boys are going great guns this year, from all I hear.

Be out on the field for practice to-morrow afternoon, and we'll do our best to redeem ourselves for that defeat by Thomaston."

There was immense jubilation on the part of Garry and his chums after Mr. Phillips had left them.

"Gee, but this is my lucky day!" exulted Bill. "To be freed from those charges and then, as if that wasn't enough, to get a place on the regulars!"

"Was I right in saying that when the thing did break you fellows wouldn't be sorry?" beamed Garry.

"You had the goods!" admitted Nick. "Though how you got them beats me," he added. "I'm still all in a daze. Mr. Allen said that those skunks had confessed. But why did they confess? We know that they didn't do it of their own accord. They'd have lied out of it if they could. He must have had them so dead to rights that lying wouldn't do them any good."

"That's what's been puzzling me too," put in Rooster. "You must know the reason, Garry. What was it?"

"Yes, you had the advance information," declared Ted. "Out with it, old boy. Spill it!"

"I can't," replied Garry. "Cross my heart and hope to die, fellows, I can't. It would bring others in that we've promised should be kept

out of it. A clue was given me by a fellow that we all know. He and I followed it up, and the whole thing came out. It was a dead open and shut certainty, and Sandy and his bunch couldn't get out of it. The only thing I didn't know was that Anderson was mixed up in it. That came out later. I suppose Sandy, likely enough, peached on him with the hope of saving his own skin. But all that doesn't matter. The only thing that counts is that we've been reinstated and that bunch has got what was coming to them."

The practice the next day was such as to fill Mr. Phillips with satisfaction. With Garry and Rooster back on the team it played as though inspired. And Bill Sherwood outdid himself at his new position. His tackling was savage and spectacular, and before the play was half over it was evident that Aleck Anderson would not be missed.

The game with Greenfield was coming on apace. It was the third game on the Lenox schedule, and it promised to be one of the hardest ones.

Thus far Lenox had played two of the five games with the teams that, besides themselves, constituted the High School League. They had beaten Pawling and been defeated by Thomaston. Greenfield was next, and then

would follow the games with Bass Lake and Wimbledon in that order.

That they could beat Bass Lake, Lenox felt reasonably certain. Greenfield would be a harder nut to crack. And harder yet probably would be the final game with Wimbledon, the team that had given Lenox its only defeat the year before and this year was reported to be stronger than ever. Wimbledon had already won both games it had played, and by impressive scores. So, while Lenox held none of its opponents cheap, it had the feeling that Wimbledon was the team it would have to beat if it again carried off the championship.

Practice went on unremittingly under the driving force of Mr. Phillips. A weakness was lopped off here, a crudity there, until the team developed into a smoothly working, hard-fighting one that no opponent could beat without putting up a tremendous battle.

"No more sixty-three to six scores this season!" chuckled Nick after a day of sparkling practice.

"Not unless we're on the big end of the score," returned Garry. "I guess we got all the bad football out of our systems in that Thomaston game."

"No more traitors on the team, anyway," stated Rooster.

"N-no," replied Bill hesitatingly. "That is, I hope not."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Garry quickly. "You hope not! Don't you know there aren't?"

"I'm sure there are none on the regulars," replied Bill. "But I feel a little leary about one fellow on the scrubs."

"Who is that?" demanded Garry.

"Well, perhaps I ought not to say it," responded Bill. "Mind, fellows, this is in strict confidence. I may be all wrong. But haven't you noticed something a little queer about Ed Bixby at right tackle?"

Garry pondered for a moment.

"Not especially," he replied slowly, "except that he seems to forget himself sometimes and resorts to dirty football. He's roughed me a good deal lately when I've come in contact with him, but I laid that to his eagerness to win."

"Maybe," admitted Bill. "As I say, I may be wrong. But what struck me is that he doesn't resort to those tricks except when he's up against you. He's all right with the other fellows, plays hard but plays fair. But he gives you the knee whenever he can. And when he tackles you he slams you to the ground as hard as he can. Looks as though he were trying to put you out."

"I remember he slugged me yesterday," re-

plied Garry. "But I thought he had lost his temper in the excitement of the game and I let it go at that."

"By itself, it might not prove anything," replied Bill. "But he was a great pal of Anderson's, and several times lately I've seen Ed with him in the street, their heads together and both talking earnestly. Of course, that may mean nothing. Then again, it may mean a good deal. Anderson, of course, is as sore as a boil at you, and if you could be put out of the game it would be pie for him and the bunch he trains with, Sandy Podder, Lent Stewart, and Chat Johns. I just wanted to put a flea in your ear, old boy, so that you'd be on your guard."

That afternoon on their way home Bill and Garry met Frank Sherwood, Bill's brother.

The change in Frank since he had been cleared of the charge of theft, falsely brought against him by Gyp Mooney and Sandy Podder, was amazing. He had learned his lesson and had cut loose entirely from his former wild associates. He had recovered all of his old pep and ambition and was making remarkable advance in his studies in the medical school, from which he had run down to spend the week end with his family.

"How are you, Garry?" Frank greeted him.

"Fine," replied Garry as they shook hands.

"I needn't ask how you are. You look like a million dollars."

"I'm feeling fit and studying hard," smiled Frank. "I'm mighty glad to learn that you and Bill have got out of your trouble at the school. It was a dirty trick those fellows played on you, and I'm glad they got what was coming to them. I've no more reason to love Sandy Podder than you have."

"I know you haven't," replied Garry, with a smile.

"All the same," went on Frank, "you want to keep your eyes peeled. Those fellows will do you mischief if they can."

"On general principles I suppose they would," replied Garry.

"But I've got something more specific than general principles to go on," warned Frank. "I saw Sandy and a pal of his on the train by which I came in this morning."

"You did?" returned Garry, with a quickening of interest.

"Yes," replied Frank. "They got on at a way station, came in at the back of the car I was in, went past me and took the seat right in front of me. They didn't notice me, but I knew Sandy at once. I ought to know him," he added grimly. "But what I'm getting at is this. They got to talking together earnestly. I didn't pay any attention until I heard them

speak your name, Garry. That interested me, especially as they were calling you all the names in the calendar."

"I can imagine some of them," laughed Garry.

"Swellhead was the mildest of them," stated Frank. "I put my paper up in front of me so if they turned around they wouldn't know who I was. They were talking rather low, and what with that and the rattle of the train I couldn't get many connected sentences. But I got enough to know that they were trying to put a raw deal over on you."

"That's their favorite outdoor sport," said Garry dryly. "Did you get any dope on what it was this time?"

"Not clearly," replied Frank. "But I caught certain phrases. 'Big bets' was one of them. 'The Wimbledon game' was another. Then there were 'sure thing,' 'all fixed,' 'can't lose.' And I heard the names of Anderson and Bixby. I don't know who they are. Do you?"

Bill and Garry looked at each other significantly.

"We know them," replied Bill. "Anderson was fired from Lenox High along with Sandy Podder and Lent Stewart. Bixby is still there."

"Well, that's about all I heard," went on Frank. "But Garry's name came in so often

that I felt sure they were cooking up something especially against him. I made up my mind I'd give you the tip. Those fellows are bad medicine."

"Thanks very much, Frank," said Garry warmly. "I'll sure be on the watch."

They changed the subject then, and after a little more conversation Frank went on, leaving Bill and Garry in an especially thoughtful mood.

"So, maybe after all it wasn't a mare's nest that I uncovered this morning," remarked Bill, as they walked on.

"Looks that way," admitted Garry. "There may be some one else in the school that'll have to be thrown overboard. Why can't fellows be decent? Why should there be such things as traitors?"

"Why should there be such things as skunks and snakes and mosquitoes?" Bill answered. "But there are, just the same. We've just got to grin and bear them."

"Not on your life!" cried Garry, clenching his fists. "We've got to fight them!"

## CHAPTER XVII

### Facing the Foe

That Bill Sherwood had not been wholly wrong in his suspicions seemed to be proved a few days later.

The practice had been unusually animated, the regulars trying to down the scrubs by as big a score as possible and the scrubs in turn fighting desperately to defend their goal line.

Garry had the ball, and was plunging through a hole that Bill and Scarsdale had made for him between right end and tackle. In doing so he came in contact with Bixby, who butted him full in the face with his head.

The blow was such a savage one that Garry went down like a steer hit by an axe, blood pouring from his nose. For a moment he lost consciousness.

Time was called while his comrades rushed to him and helped him to his feet. Through his dazed eyes Garry caught sight of Bixby and tried to get at him, but his mates restrained him.

Mr. Phillips rushed out on the field while Garry was struggling to free himself.

"What is the meaning of this?" he asked sharply of Bixby. "What kind of tactics are those to use on the football field?"

"It was an accident," muttered Bixby. "I miscalculated when I dived for him."

"Accident nothing!" roared Bill. "You butted him deliberately! I saw you! You tried to knock him out!"

"Nothing of the kind," retorted Bixby, but his eyes lowered as they tried to meet Bill's.

"Get off the field, Bixby," commanded Mr. Phillips quietly. "This isn't your first offense. I've noticed several times lately you've tried to rough Grayson, though he's said nothing about it. Selleck, you take Bixby's place."

"Didn't think this was a game for ladies," sneered Bixby, as he slunk away.

"It isn't," replied Mr. Phillips. "But it is a game for gentlemen, not rowdies. There'll be no dirty tactics on the field while I have charge of the Lenox High athletics. You're out of the game for the rest of the season."

"Well," said Bill a little later, as he and Garry were strolling homeward, "was I right or wasn't I in that hunch of mine?"

"It was a good hunch all right," agreed Garry. "That was no accident. I saw the look in Bixby's eyes as he charged at me. He

aimed his head right at my face. Gee, but my nose is sore!'' he added, as he tenderly rubbed that bruised feature. ''It's half again its usual size.''

''Hello!'' Ella greeted him as he came in that afternoon. ''How handsome you look, Garry. If only Jane Danter could see you now she'd rave over you.''

''Never mind the looks,'' returned Garry, as he threw his cap on a chair. ''And as for raving, there's always plenty of that when you're around.''

He could not be quite so flippant with his mother, however, who was rather alarmed when she saw the size to which the swelling had attained and insisted on his going at once to the family doctor to make sure that the nose was not broken.

The doctor reassured him on that point, much to the relief of the whole family. To tell the truth, Garry himself had been greatly concerned. He, naturally, did not want his appearance marred by a broken nose, but, he reflected, if it had been broken, it would have kept him out of the game for the season. Was it possible, he asked himself, that Bixby had had that in mind when he catapulted into him?

The next morning Bill complacently exhibited a pair of skinned knuckles.

"Where did you get those?" asked Ted Dillingham interestedly.

"Ask Ed Bixby," grinned Bill. "I ran across him last night, and we had a little argument. My knuckles are skinned and his eyes are blacked. If you can put two and two together, you can guess what happened. Take a look at him to-day in class."

Selleck, who took Bixby's place on the scrubs, proved to be a capable player, and practice proceeded with redoubled energy right up to the day set for the Greenfield game.

That was scheduled to take place on the Greenfield grounds, and a big crowd of Lenox rooters went over with their team to cheer it on to victory. They were enthusiastic fans, too, for the work of the team since Garry's return had inspired them with high hopes.

Greenfield was not lacking a whit in confidence, for it had in mind the overwhelming defeat that Lenox had suffered at the hands of Thomaston, and expected to ride roughshod over the visitors.

The day itself was the coldest that far of the season. Though mid-October, it seemed more like December. Flurries of snow fell fitfully at intervals throughout the morning, and a bitter wind chilled one to the marrow. But it would require more than cold weather to keep the partisans of either team from the field, and

by the time the game began the stands were fully as crowded as usual.

"That snow's a good omen," chuckled Bill. "It means that we're going to snow Greenfield under."

"Likely enough they'd put it the other way," laughed Garry. "Old Jack Frost won't have much to do with this game. We've got to do the work."

Jack Frost, however, had this much to do with the game, that he made it a running game. The gale that swept over the gridiron prevented any extensive attempts at forward passing, and made punting so dubious that it was not resorted to any oftener than necessary.

"Here's where our backs come in," muttered Garry to himself, as he took account of the weather conditions. "They'll have to do most of the work."

Lenox won the toss and elected to kick off. Rooster sent the ball whirling down the field for thirty yards. Myers got the ball and ran it back for three yards before Bill downed him. The game was on, with the ball in Greenfield's possession on its thirty-three-yard line.

Risley, their left halfback, plunged through the line for a gain of three. Clark, their fullback, made two more between left tackle and end. Myers met a stone wall and was thrown back for the loss of a yard. With only one

down left and six to go, Greenfield tried a forward pass which resulted in only a four-yard gain, and the ball was Lenox's on the Greenfield forty-one-yard line.

Garry sent Rooster through for a gain of three on the right side of the Greenfield line. Nick tried it on the left, but was halted without gain. Knapp pulled off five on his next plunge between right tackle and end. With two to go on the fourth down Rooster bored between left tackle and guard for just enough to make the distance and retain the ball.

But Garry had learned something from those downs. That was that Greenfield was strong on the left, where there was plenty of beef, but considerably weaker on the right where the trio were much lighter. And from that moment he commenced a vicious attack on the right, hammering away at it mercilessly.

Down the field Lenox went until it was within nine yards of the enemy's goal. There Greenfield braced for a desperate resistance. But though they twice threw back the Lenox plungers without a gain, Garry on the third down took the ball himself, plunged through the line like a bull, with the whole Greenfield team trying to stop him, and put the ball over the line for the first touchdown of the game. Rooster kicked the goal and the score was 7 to 0 in favor of the visitors.

The Lenox rooters roared their applause while the Greenfield partisans sat glum and silent and filled with consternation. What magic was this? Was this the team that Thomaston had walked all over two weeks before?

But worse—from the Greenfield viewpoint—was to come. The ball had scarcely been put in play again before Nick picked up a fumbled ball, skirted the right end, and, running like a deer, with superb interference from Bill and Knapp, carried it over the line for another touchdown. Garry booted the goal for the extra point, and now Lenox was fourteen to the good.

Only once through that period did Greenfield threaten. That was when Greenfield, with Clark doing most of the ball-carrying, tore through the Lenox forwards for three first downs and an advance from the Greenfield twenty-three-yard mark to the forty-one-yard line of Lenox. But that was as far as they got. Henderson fumbled a bad pass from center and lost twelve yards in consequence, and before they could get going again the referee's whistle signaled the end of the period.

"What was it I said about Greenfield being snowed under?" gurgled Bill, as the weary warriors took their brief rest before again plunging into battle.

"I don't know about being snowed under, but they're certainly whitened up a bit," laughed

Garry. "But that may be because they started the game thinking we'd be too easy. They know better now, and they may take a brace."

"I don't believe it," scoffed Rooster. "We've got 'em going. It's simply Lenox's day, and they haven't got a chance."

It seemed as though Rooster were right, for touchdowns came thick and fast as soon as the second period opened. Lenox, taking the leather on its forty-five-yard strip after the kick-off, started in immediately on its line crushing operations. Again and again the backs went through that fatally weak right side of the Greenfield line. A thirteen-yard gain by Rooster around the end and a twelve-yard smash by Knapp brought the ball within striking distance of the enemy goal, and then in two successive tries Nick carried it across. Four minutes later another followed, Knapp making twenty-one yards off right tackle and Garry streaking through the Greenfield forwards for thirty-four yards and falling over the line. On both occasions Bill kicked the goal.

The Greenfield team was now thoroughly demoralized, and their rout became complete when Garry once more took it over after he had thrown a runner for a fifteen-yard loss and blocked a punt. Rooster failed on the kick for point, but a trifle like that counted for

little, and the total score was now 34 to 0 in favor of the visitors.

Greenfield had a glimmer of hope when they got one of their kick-offs on the Lenox eighteen-yard line after Knapp had played tag with the leather. But four downs failed to gain the distance and Rooster kicked the ball to the middle of the field, where it was when the period ended with the score unchanged.

Mr. Phillips came to Garry as the jubilant team was resting between periods.

"I think," he said, "that here is a chance for the substitutes to get a little practice in a regular game. I want to save the regulars as far as possible for the games yet to come. It looks as though we had the game won, though nothing is certain in football. But if we find that Greenfield is threatening, we can easily put the regulars back again and they'll be all the better for a little rest. What do you think?"

"I guess that will be all right," assented Garry. "We can put in the whole scrub team, if you wish. They'll be tickled to death to have the chance, and it looks safe enough."

"No," returned Mr. Phillips, "I don't want to go as far as that. You and the backs had better stay in to steady the others, but I'll put in an entirely new string of linesmen."

So the scrubs poured in to show what they

could do, determined if possible to show up the regulars by bettering their score.

But in this they reckoned without their host. The Greenfield team, stung to the quick by the slur implied by putting in second-string men against them, braced up and played like furies. The substitutes found that they had their hands full in trying to hold their own. They did hold it, however, in the third quarter, but in the final period Greenfield escape the disgrace of a whitewash by pushing one of their backs over for a touchdown.

This, however, was as far as they got. And in the last three minutes of play Garry once more touched off the fireworks when he scooped up a fumbled ball, bolted around the right end, and came to earth only after he had once more planted the ball over the enemy's line, to a thundering chorus from the Lenox stands:

"Lenox! Lenox! Len, Len, Len!
Look, oh, look at that boy run!
Our Garry Grayson!
Lenox! Lenox! Len, Len, Len!"

## CHAPTER XVIII

### Crooked Work

"Well, we've redeemed ourselves," stated Garry Grayson, as, dusty and begrimed, he ran with his comrades for the clubhouse.

"We sure have!" chortled Nick. "We stood those fellows on their heads good and proper. They don't know yet how it happened."

It was a hilarious crowd that journeyed back to Lenox, taking with them metaphorical scalps to hang on their wigwam.

"Did you see some of our old friends in the stands?" queried Ted.

"I thought we had lots of them," replied Garry, "judging by the cheering."

"So we did," agreed Ted. "But the friends I mean are the kind that would like to see you skinned alive."

"Oh, you mean Sandy Podder and his pals?" replied Garry. "No, I was too busy playing to notice them. Of course they were rooting for Lenox," he added, with a grin.

"Praying that you would break your leg, most likely," put in Rooster Long. "It was a

cold day for everybody, but I imagine it must have been especially chilly for Sandy and his bunch. How they'd have liked to see us torn to bits by Greenfield!"

"Too bad we couldn't oblige them, but we needed that game in our business," laughed Garry. "I wonder how the Pawling-Wimbledon game came out to-day."

"Here's hoping that Pawling won!" exclaimed Rooster. "That would take down Wimbledon's chestiness a bit. They're already figuring on getting the pole for the pennant."

To the Lenox team's great satisfaction, the boys learned on arriving in the home town that Pawling had indeed defeated Wimbledon, but by the close score of 10 to 9.

"Must have been a pretty tough fight," commented Garry. "But one point is as good as fifty, as long as it's on the right side. Now we stand on even terms with Wimbledon with two won and one lost. It looks as though our game with Wimbledon will decide which school gets the flag."

There was no practice the next Monday afternoon at Lenox, for Mr. Phillips decided that his weary warriors had well earned a rest. But he asked Garry to see him after the close of school.

"I've been thinking, Grayson," began Mr. Phillips when they were alone together, "that

it might be a good thing if we changed our system of signals."

Garry looked at him in surprise.

"Why, what's wrong with them?" he asked.

"Nothing at all," replied Mr. Phillips. "They're about as good and scientific a system as can be devised. All the same, I think it might be a good idea to change them."

"Why, of course it's just as you say, Mr. Phillips," Garry replied. "But don't you think it may get the fellows a little mixed? They're so used to the old ones now that it's come to be second nature to obey them. They don't need to think; it comes to them by instinct. And everything's been working as smooth as silk so far. They've got them down fine."

Mr. Phillips pondered for a moment.

"There's something in what you say," he conceded, "and I want to make sure of that Bass Lake game, so that we may be certain of meeting Wimbledon in the final struggle. I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll compromise. We'll let the old system stand until after we've played Bass Lake. But for Wimbledon we'll have a brand new set."

Garry racked his brain to find what Mr. Phillips was driving at. He could see nothing but risk in the plan.

"Got you guessing, has it, Grayson?" he

asked, with a quizzical smile. "I don't wonder. On the face of it, it doesn't look so good. But you must believe that I have a good reason. I'll tell you just what it is when I get more definite information. Don't say anything to the other boys about this interview until I give the word."

With this Garry had to be content. But he was sorely perplexed as he wended his way homeward, pondering on what Mr. Phillips had said.

The signals they had been using had been so dinned into the players' heads that it had become second nature to obey them. This was as it should be. In a hot fight where a play had to be timed to a fraction of a second, there was no time to debate the meaning of a signal.

If now the old ones were thrown into the discard and a new set substituted, he foresaw trouble and confusion. The old and the new would struggle for the mastery. What on earth could Mr. Phillips be thinking about?

But there must be a reason, and a good one. Garry had implicit confidence in the coach. He knew he would not take this risk unless a greater risk threatened. What was that greater risk?

It came to him in a flash!

The greater risk would be if the opposing team should get to know the Lenox signals.

Then they would be able to anticipate every play. They would know who was to buck the line, who was to carry the ball around the ends, what would be the signal for the forward pass —everything, in fact, that it was to the interest of Lenox that they should not know!

No team, however good, could hope to stand up against a handicap like that. It would be beaten before it began to play.

Then another thought came to Garry. Mr. Phillips had yielded very easily to the retention of the old signals until after the Bass Lake game. Then it was not that team that he was feeling uneasy about! But he had been adamant in his determination to change the system before the Wimbledon game. It was Wimbledon then that loomed big in the coach's thought.

Had Wimbledon caught on to Lenox signals? Garry wondered. Had its scouts been on the watch? Garry dismissed this thought almost as soon as it was formed. No strangers were allowed on the Lenox grounds during practice, and even if one were hiding somewhere under the stands, he could not get near enough to the players to hear or understand the signals.

Besides, it would have been a hideously unsportsmanlike thing to do, and there had never yet been any scandal of that kind in the High School League.

Still, Mr. Phillips seemed afraid that Wim-

bledon had got the signals or might get them. But it could get them only if they were offered to it. And they could be offered only by those who knew them. And none knew them except the Lenox players, the regulars, and the scrubs.

Ah! Garry started. There was the rub! Some one else did know them! Former players on the Lenox team knew them. Aleck Anderson knew them! Ed Bixby knew them!

Then the story of Frank Sherwood came back to his mind. What were those phrases Frank had overheard? "Big bets," was one of them. "Wimbledon game" was another. Then there were "sure thing," "all fixed," and "can't lose." And the names of Anderson and Bixby had been mentioned.

As all these things came back to him Garry felt sure that he had found the key to the puzzle. His heart burned with indignation. It would have done him a lot of good if he could have sought out his chums and talked the matter over with them. His burden would have been lighter if it could have been shared. But Mr. Phillips' injunction had been strict that he should say no word to any one until he gave permission.

But after all there was a silver lining to the cloud. In some way, Mr. Phillips had learned something of what was in the wind. Lenox would not be caught unawares. A grim smile

came to Garry's lips as he thought of the consternation of the conspirators when they should find that all their plans had come to nothing.

After the one day of rest that Mr. Phillips had given his teams, practice went on hard and steadily for the Bass Lake game. Bass Lake was not as strong as Greenfield, and Lenox had beaten the latter by a decisive score. In theory, then, it ought to be easier to beat Bass Lake by an even larger margin.

But no one knew better than Garry how deceptive were comparative scores. The team that played like chumps one day might play like champions on another. Nothing must be taken for granted in football.

So by precept and example Garry drove on his team until, when the day came for the Bass Lake game on the Lenox grounds, his team was at the top of its form.

It was well that it was, for Bass Lake put up a plucky and surprisingly good game. During most of the afternoon it provided stubborn opposition to the fast moving backs of the Lenox team.

Lenox made a good start, Rooster galloping around the offensive in the first period and tearing through the line for eight yards, and then on a double pass making a twenty-four-yard gain around left end. This gallop availed little, however, as Lenox was forced to punt

out. But when Lenox got the ball again Nick went around the left wing for twenty yards, and then on a beautiful forward pass, Knapp to Bill, the ball was carried to the Bass Lake fifteen-yard line. Tom plunged through for three yards, and then Garry carried it for the remaining twelve, scoring the first touchdown of the game. Rooster kicked the point and the score was 7 to 0 in favor of Lenox.

After the kick-off Bass Lake braced, and the ball passed alternately from side to side, being in midfield when the quarter ended.

Soon after the second period opened Cassidy put new cheer into the Bass Lake rooters by scoring a field goal from the twenty-five-yard line. Encouraged by this, the visitors' line stiffened and held Lenox scoreless through the period.

In the third quarter was shown some of the prettiest line smashing of the game. Little forward passing was attempted, owing to the high wind that had arisen and made accuracy difficult.

Back and forth the lines surged, each side making gains through the line, only to lose them when the other side got the advantage.

It was nip and tuck, and the spectators in the stands were on their feet cheering in turn as their side seemed to have the upper hand. But for most of the time it was the case of an

irresistible force meeting an immovable body, and the quarter ended with the score still 7 to 3 in favor of Lenox.

"Not such a cinch as we expected," panted Garry, in the brief breathing space between quarters.

"You said it!" returned Rooster. "We've got those fellows beaten, but they don't know it."

Some time was yet to elapse before Bass Lake knew it. They fought like tigers for the first ten minutes of the last period, and once came within striking distance of the Lenox goal.

But then Lenox put forth all its strength and began the march down the field. Spectacular line bucking and end running by Garry, Nick, and Rooster landed the ball on Bass Lake's sixteen-yard line. Bill went through for five yards and a pass from Garry to Tom netted five more.

Here Lenox, however, was penalized five yards for offside play. But with the goal only eleven yards away, Lenox would not be denied. Nick went through for three. Bill tore between left end and tackle for five. Then, with one desperate plunge, Garry carried the ball over the line for the second touchdown. Nick tried for point, but the wind baffled him, and before the ball could again be put in play the

whistle blew for the end of the game, and Lenox had triumphed by 13 to 3.

It had been a rattling game, and Bass Lake, though beaten, was not disgraced. The breaks of the game had been about equally divided, and neither side could accuse Lady Luck of partiality. Lenox had conquered because it was the better team, but the margin was not much to brag about or to fill Lenox with overconfidence.

"And now for the Wimbledon game!" cried Rooster hilariously. "That team's our next victim!"

"Cherry pie!" predicted Bill.

"People have strangled on the pits in cherry pie," warned Garry.

"Wimbledon game." "Big bets." "All fixed." "Can't lose."

Garry shook himself impatiently. Why did those phrases persist in haunting him?

## CHAPTER XIX

### Weaving the Web

Sandy Podder had a most distressing time of it, following his expulsion from the school. He was filled with shame and humiliation at the public disgrace. But far stronger than these emotions was the rage he felt at Garry Grayson because of the latter's vindication. Sandy had thought his scheme perfect. He could not see how it could slip a cog. Yet that it had slipped was only too evident. Now he, Sandy, was held up to public reprobation, while Garry was riding on the crest of the wave.

He cudgeled his brain to find the reasons of his failure. Had his accomplices betrayed him? He dismissed this thought promptly. They could not double-cross him without giving themselves away. They were as deep in the mud as he was in the mire. All their interest lay in keeping the secret.

Could it have been Jake? He had been so befuddled on that night at the roadhouse that he could not remember clearly what had happened there. But he had a dim recollection of

boasting to Jake of what he and his pals were going to do to Garry Grayson. He questioned Jake, but that individual was blandly innocent.

"I know nuddings," he said. "Vot you dink, dot I gif such a good customer de rinky-dink?"

The atmosphere in the Podder home did not contribute to Sandy's comfort. His father was bitterly angry, and let no chance pass to remind Sandy that he was a thorn in the flesh. He threatened to make him go to work, a terrible threat to Sandy. His mother, too, was exasperated at him and took no pains to hide it.

So about all the comfort that Sandy got was in consorting with his pals, who were in equally bad case, Lent Stewart and Aleck Anderson. On occasion Bixby joined them in their conferences. He was still a member of the school, but terribly sore at having been barred from athletics and thoroughly in sympathy with the trio, and his hatred of Garry was almost as keen.

At first Aleck Anderson was inclined to be a little offish, for he had an idea that Sandy had dragged him in unnecessarily, which was indeed the fact. But Sandy falsified glibly and was backed up by Stewart.

"You don't think I'd go back on an old pal, do you?" he said wheedlingly to Aleck. "Not on your life! Old Allen had the goods on all

three of us, though it keeps me awake nights wondering how he got it."

"It doesn't matter how he got it," growled Aleck, mollified and half-convinced by Sandy's statement and Stewart's corroboration. "The fact is that he got it, and I haven't any use for postmortems."

"Well," said Sandy, "are we going to take it lying down?"

"Might as well lie down as stand up," returned Aleck Anderson disconsolately. "We're licked, anyway."

"Come out of your trance," counseled Sandy. "I've got a bully idea to get even."

"I hope it's better than most of your ideas," put in Lent ungraciously. "The last one was a frost."

"Everybody flivvers once in a while," Sandy defended himself. "I never noticed that you were such a much. But listen now. What would make that swell-headed Garry Grayson feel worse than anything else?"

The others considered for a moment.

"To have Lenox beaten for the championship," replied Lent Stewart.

"Exactly!" agreed Sandy. "Now I've got a plan to make Lenox lose and make Garry Grayson as sore as a boil, and while we're about it we can pick up quite a pile of cash on the side."

"How are you going to do it?" asked Aleck unbelievingly. "Going to break Garry's legs? Bixby already has tried to break his nose, but didn't get away with it."

"No such rough stuff," replied Sandy. "I'm using my brains."

Lent Stewart grunted uncomplimentarily.

"That's what I said," declared Sandy, flashing a dirty look at his pal. "Brains! Look here. Wimbledon is the big game, isn't it? We'll leave out Bass Lake, for Lenox can win that with a team of cripples. But Wimbledon is the team that Lenox has got to beat for the championship. Am I right?"

The others nodded assent.

"Well then," went on Sandy, "the teams are pretty well matched as they stand. It's a toss-up as to which will win. Now suppose that Wimbledon got hold of Lenox's signals. What would happen then?"

His companions started violently as the idea hit them.

"Wimbledon would have a walkover," declared Aleck Anderson.

"She'd score all the touchdowns she wanted," agreed Lent. "There'd be a slaughter."

"Sure she would!" affirmed Sandy, proud of the impression his dastardly suggestion had made. "And if we put up all the money we

could rake together on Wimbledon, we'd cop off a pile. We couldn't lose!"

There was silence for a few moments, while the boys ruminated on the possibilities involved in the scheme.

"But suppose we did offer Wimbledon the signals and they refused to take them?" suggested Aleck. "They might do that, you know."

"Do you suppose we're going to call a mass meeting and offer them to Wimbledon in public?" sneered Sandy. "We'll have to sound out some one of the team, the one that would be likeliest to fall for it. Do you know any of the members of the team?"

"I know them by sight, of course," replied Aleck Anderson. "But there's only one of them that I know well enough to talk to. I met him on my summer vacation. That's Bill Sykes, the captain of the team."

"Captain, is he?" said Sandy quickly. "Better and better! How is he fixed—financially I mean?"

"Poor as a church mouse," relied Anderson. "He was working as a waiter at the hotel where I was staying. He does some work during every vacation to help support himself, and even helps the janitor a bit around the high school during the school terms. But what has that got to do with it?"

"It has everything to do with it!" replied Sandy jubilantly. "A few ten dollar bills would make him open his eyes. We could give him a slice of our winnings. And he needn't feel that he's doing anything wrong," the rascal added with specious sophistry, "for he'd only be helping his own school along. I tell you, Aleck, if you only put it to him right, the thing's as good as done!"

They discussed the matter further, perfecting the details. Then they parted, convinced that the scheme would work.

A couple of days later when they met again Aleck Anderson had a long face, and the other conspirators saw at once that something had happened.

"What's the matter?" queried Sandy anxiously.

"You look as though you had been to a funeral," commented Lent.

"I'm afraid our cake is dough," replied Aleck, as he sat down disconsolately on a box in the Stewarts' garage, which was their usual place of meeting.

"Why?" asked Sandy Podder. "Wouldn't Sykes fall for it?"

"I haven't had a chance to see him yet," replied Aleck. "No, it isn't that. It's something that happened a little while ago when I was walking with Ed Bixby."

"What was it?" fumed Sandy. "Get to the point. Has that boob been spilling the beans?"

"Not on purpose; but I'm afraid he's done it just the same," explained Anderson. "You see it was this way. I had just met him and we were walking along, paying no attention to anybody. Then Bixby up and asked me:

" 'How about those signals, Aleck? Have you fixed it up with Wimbledon yet?' "

"And just at that minute Mr. Phillips came around the corner and almost bumped into us!"

A cry of consternation burst from the lips of his companions.

"Mr. Phillips!" groaned Lent.

"Did he hear what Bixby said?" asked Sandy, his face a yellowish-green.

"I'm afraid he did," admitted Anderson. "He was going to speak to us, to say 'good afternoon' I suppose, but he stopped short with his mouth wide open. Then he looked at us as though we were snakes or something and marched on without saying a word. The game's up! We're done!"

## CHAPTER XX

### In Desperate Plight

There was a moment of panic-stricken silence as Aleck Anderson's words sank in. Sandy was the first to speak.

"Of all the rotten fools!" he burst out. "You fellows ought to have a guardian."

"That's enough of that," replied Aleck hotly. "Another crack like that and I'll give you a belt in the jaw."

Sandy quailed before the threat, for he was a physical as well as a moral coward.

"Come, come now," put in Lent soothingly. "There's no use of either one of you fellows going on like that. We're all in the same boat. Let's be sensible and cool off."

"We'll have plenty of time to cool off," grumbled Aleck, resuming the seat from which he had risen. "In fact, that's all we've got left to do. We're through!"

"I'm not so sure of that," vouchsafed Sandy. "In the first place, we're not dead sure that Phillips heard you. If he didn't, we're just where we were."

"Don't kid yourself," relied Aleck. "I know from his actions and the look in his eye that he heard us, all right."

"Well, admit that he did," went on Sandy. "What do you suppose will be the first thing that he'll do?"

"Change the signals, of course," affirmed Anderson. "Then the old ones will be no good. We'll have nothing to bargain with."

"Not unless we get the new ones," said Sandy.

Aleck guffawed.

"Swell chance!" he said scornfully. "Do you suppose they're going to publish them in the town paper?"

"Don't talk rot," adjured Sandy irritably. "There ought to be some way for us to get them on the quiet."

"Ought!" sneered Aleck. "You're talking like a ham sandwich. They'll watch over those signals like a mother over her baby. No one outside the team can get near the field."

"Ed Bixby—" began Lent Stewart.

"Ed Bixby neither," snapped Aleck. "You know as well as I that he's barred from athletics for the season."

"I wasn't thinking of the field," put in Sandy.

"What were you thinking of then?" asked Aleck.

"The gymnasium," replied Sandy. "That's where Phillips will bring up the matter of the changes. Now we know how that gymnasium's laid out. Look here. Listen!"

The three boys had their heads together for a long time after that, and when they separated they were in a far more cheerful mood than they had been an hour before.

The day after the Bass Lake game, Mr. Phillips called his charges together in the gymnasium of the school.

"You've done well, boys, in beating Bass Lake," he said. "But of course you've heard that Wimbledon won again yesterday, leaving you still neck and neck, each having three victories and one defeat. So your game with Wimbledon will decide the championship, as no other team has as good a record.

"We'll lick 'em!" cried the irrepressible Rooster.

"Cock-a-doodle-doo!" called a voice, and there was a general laugh.

Mr. Phillips smiled.

"I'd rather hear a crow than a groan," he said. "I want you to go into that fight determined on victory, as long as that doesn't breed over-confidence. Now what I called you together for to-day is something out of the ordinary. We're going to change our signals for the Wimbledon game."

There was a general gasp of astonishment. The boys looked at each other in consternation.

"Take it all back," whispered Rooster to Garry. "Wimbledon will tie us up in knots."

"No," smiled Mr. Phillips, reading aright the glances interchanged. "I haven't taken leave of my senses. I know what a serious thing it is to adopt an entirely new system just a little while before an important game. But I am also sure that it would be a much more serious thing if we didn't. In a choice between two evils, I've had to take the lesser."

Garry, of course, with his advance information, had not been taken by surprise like the others. But he was sorely regretful, just the same. He had been hoping that Mr. Phillips on reflection would see his way clear to retain the old signals. That he had not done so showed that the danger, whatever it was, was still imminent.

"Now," went on the coach, "I've worked out the new system, and we'll run off the plays under them this afternoon. I think you'll catch on readily, but it will need incessant practice to get them into your minds so that your response will be automatic. And I want to warn you boys against saying a word to anybody about the change. That is vital. Don't even speak to any one in your own families about it, as some one of them might inadvertently men-

tion it, and I wouldn't for the world have it get abroad. Now listen to me while I go over them."

For the next half hour the coach discussed and illustrated the new system, going over each play again and again until he was sure the boys understood.

"That will do for theory," he said at last. "Now we'll go out on the field and put them into practice."

The teams swarmed out after the coach and silence reigned in the gymnasium.

Not for long, however. Slowly, very slowly, the door of an old closet, used by the janitor to store odds and ends, was pushed open. A face appeared at the opening, and shifty eyes glanced about the deserted room.

"All clear," came in a whisper.

Two boys emerged from the closet and slipped up the stairs into a corridor of the school and thence through the front door into the street.

They were Aleck Anderson and Bixby!

## CHAPTER XXI

### Temptation

When the football practice was over and the boys were on their way home, Garry Grayson's friends were in a ferment of wonder and excitement.

"Now what do you know about that!" exclaimed Rooster. "Changing signals just before the game with Wimbledon!"

"Committing suicide, if you ask me," grumbled Nick Danter.

"Came like a thunder clap," declared Bill. "Knocked me all of a heap. I have to pinch myself to find out whether I'm dreaming."

"You don't seem especially disturbed about it, Garry," said Ted, giving the quarterback a poke in the ribs.

"I wasn't so surprised as the rest of you because Mr. Phillips had spoken to me before about it," replied Garry. "But I'm sure upset, just the same. It is going to make our work mighty hard."

"You knew, and you wouldn't tell us!" exclaimed Nick. "A clam hasn't anything on you!"

"I wanted to badly enough, but Mr. Phillips told me to keep it under my hat until he was ready to spring it," replied Garry.

"But what on earth is the reason?" asked Rooster Long perplexedly.

"There can be only one reason," answered Garry, "and that is that he thinks Wimbledon has our signals or may get them. So he wants to double-cross them."

"Get our signals?" cried Bill, in astonishment. "Have they been sending any of their scouts around?"

"I don't think so," replied Garry. "At least, I haven't noticed any snooping going on. No, if Wimbledon's got them, it's because somebody in Lenox, somebody familiar with the signals, has given or sold them to her."

"What?" exclaimed Nick, in horror. "Do you mean to say there's any one connected with Lenox High who would stoop to such a dirty trick as that? Why, if they did, they ought—they ought to be—" Nick stuttered and hesitated, unable to think of any punishment he considered severe enough.

"Sure!" agreed Garry. "And that, whatever it is, would be letting them off easy. I'll bet my hat, though, that something like that is the explanation. Mr. Phillips got next to it in some way, though I don't know how, and he's trying to balk the scheme."

"I'll bet Sandy Podder and Lent Stewart are at the bottom of it!" exclaimed Bill Sherwood.

"I wouldn't put it past them," said Rooster. "But they don't know the signals well enough to give them away. They haven't played football since they've been at Lenox High."

"No, but some of their pals have," put in Ted. "Could it be that—" He stopped as though reluctant to voice his thought.

"I know what name you were going to say," Bill remarked. "Aleck Anderson. He's as sore as a boil, I know; but I hate to think he'd do a thing like that."

"So would I," said Garry. "But he's been with Sandy and Lent an awful lot of late. And you remember, Bill, that when Frank told us of the talk he overheard between Sandy and Lent he said they mentioned the names of Aleck and of Ed Bixby."

"Bixby, too," mused Ted. "Is he tarred with the same brush?"

"Well, we don't know," replied Garry. "And since we don't, perhaps it's fairer to leave their names out of it until we have something definite. Anyway, it doesn't matter. We've put a spoke in their wheel by changing the signals. The old ones aren't worth a rap now, and if Wimbledon relies on them, she's bound to get stung. Say, wouldn't it be a joke

if Wimbledon decided to count on them?" he added with a chuckle. "Can't you see those fellows running around like chickens with their heads cut off, wondering what had gone wrong with the dope?"

The picture conjured up was an amusing one and provoked the laughter of the boys. But the laughter would have been much less hearty had they been able to see who were in the Stewarts' garage at that moment and hear what was going on.

Sandy and Lent had entered it early that afternoon, and for an hour or so had been walking the floor and biting their nails with impatience.

"Do you think they'll put it over?" asked Sandy nervously.

"I think likely," replied Lent reassuringly. "I think the chances are ten to one. Still, you never can tell. The janitor might have gone to that closet at any time to get some of his things. I hate to think what would happen to Aleck and Bixby if they were discovered there while the teams were in the gymnasium. What the players would do to them would be a plenty."

A little later three taps came on the door. It was the long awaited signal, and Sandy unlocked the door eagerly. Aleck and Bixby came in breathlessly.

"Well, did you get them?" asked Sandy, with feverish anxiety, as he locked the door again and turned toward them.

"Surest thing you know!" replied Aleck, as he took a notebook from his breast pocket and displayed pages scrawled over with figures.

"Like taking candy from a baby!" gloated Bixby. "Old Phillips never thought of looking in the closets before he began his talk. Gee, I was sweating, though, for fear he would! If he had—phew!"

Sandy looked exultingly at the figures.

"Sure they're right?" he asked.

"Dead sure," replied Aleck. "We didn't have any trouble in hearing all he said. And he went over them again and again to make sure the fellows understood. You can gamble on it that they're correct."

"Bully!" exclaimed Sandy. "Now we're all set. This time Garry Grayson will get all that's coming to him! Now the next thing to do is to see Bill Sykes."

"Who's going to do it?" asked Aleck.

"Why, you'd be the best one for that," replied Sandy. "You know him and we don't."

"Then if he doesn't fall for it, I'd be left holding the bag," objected Aleck. "If he chose to blab, the whole blame would be laid on me. Not on your life! We're all in this together, and you fellows will have to come along. I'll

introduce him to you, and you, Sandy, can do most of the talking. It's your scheme, and besides you can talk more convincingly than I can," he added.

Sandy fell for the flattery and swelled up like a pouter pigeon.

"All right," he agreed. "I'll get my car, and we'll go over to Wimbledon to-morrow afternoon. You 'phone him in the meantime, Aleck, and make an appointment for him to meet us at the hotel. We'll give him a swell supper and then we'll take him for a ride. Then we'll spring the thing on him and try to put it over."

The next afternoon the four conspirators rode over to Wimbledon in Sandy's sporty car and put up at the hotel. They had to wait awhile for their expected guest, who arrived a little later, and somewhat breathlessly apologized for being late, explaining that he had had some work to do at the school. As they already knew from Aleck Anderson that he aided the janitor at times, they understood.

Bill Sykes was a muscular, stocky individual, a good football player and captain of the eleven. That money was scarce with him, however, was evident from his worn and shabby coat and the trousers that were frayed at the bottom. It was plain that he had hard work to get along.

Aleck greeted him cordially.

"Hello, Bill!" he said, as they shook hands. "How's tricks?"

"Oh, so-so," answered Bill. "Plenty of hard work and little to show for it."

"A little easy work and a good deal to show for it would be better, would it?" laughed Aleck. "Well, perhaps we can put you in the way of it. I want you to meet my friends," and he introduced his companions.

Sandy was especially effusive. No business, though, till after supper, had been the decision, so he said:

"Let's go in and get a swell feed and take a little ride afterward."

The supper was an especially good one, and in paying for it Sandy ostentatiously displayed a considerable roll of bills. This, together with the natty car, produced an impression on Bill Sykes, who seldom saw money in quantity.

Following the meal they rode out on the country roads, and when they came to a secluded, quiet spot Sandy drew the car off the side of the road and stopped.

"Like to make a little coin, Bill?" he asked without further preamble.

"Who wouldn't?" answered Bill Sykes.

"That's right," returned Sandy. "It's what we're all after. Well, I think I can show you

how to do it and at the same time do your school a good turn."

"Just what do you mean?" asked Sykes, puzzled.

"It's this way," explained Sandy. "You want to see Wimbledon lick Lenox, don't you?"

"Of course I do," replied Bill.

"So do I," Sandy spat out venomously. "Lick the tar out of her!"

"It won't be any cinch though," observed Bill.

"It would be a cinch though, wouldn't it, if you knew the Lenox signals?"

## CHAPTER XXII

### The Stolen Signals

Bill Sykes sat up with a jerk, while Sandy and his companions watched him narrowly.

"If we could get the Lenox signals!" he exclaimed. "Of course it would be a cinch. But how on earth could we get them? They hold them tighter than a miser grips a dollar."

"I've got them right here in my pocket," replied Sandy, tapping his coat.

"But—but—I don't understand," stammered Bill Sykes, looking from one to the other in a bewildered manner. "How did you get them? Why do you bring them to me? What's the big idea, anyway?"

"Never mind how we got them," replied Sandy. "The fact is, I have them. And I'm offering them to you free, gratis, for nothing. As to the big idea, it's this. Lenox High has done us dirt. It's thrown three of us out just on account of a bit of a lark. It's barred another of us from athletics just because he roughed it a little with that boob, Garry Grayson. Is it any wonder we're sore? Who

wouldn't be that had any spirit? We want to get even with the school that's treated us that way, and we don't know anything that would hit it harder than to have the team it's so proud of beaten by Wimbledon. There you have the whole thing."

"I can see why you feel sore," said Bill slowly. "But as to my taking the signals, I—I don't know. It's a thing that isn't done. It doesn't seem sportsmanlike."

"Oh, cut out that sportsmanlike stuff," counseled the tempter. "You want to win, don't you? You're looking out for the best interests of Wimbledon, aren't you? Don't be too namby-pamby. It never got any one anywhere. You owe it to your school to do everything you can to win. Lenox would do it quickly enough, if the situation were reversed."

"Besides," put in Lent, "it isn't as if you yourself had deliberately set to work to get the signals. Some people might criticize you, if you did that. But when they're handed to you on a silver tray, as it were, you'd be just a plain fool not to take them. There's such a thing as standing up so straight that you fall over backward."

"It would be different, too, if we were asking you to sell us Wimbledon's signals," put in Sandy. "Then it would be all right for you to refuse to hurt your own school. But we're

not asking you to hurt Wimbledon. We're giving you a chance to help her."

Seeing that his sophistry was having some effect, Sandy played his trump card.

"Not only will you be helping your school, but you'll be helping yourself financially," he said. "I don't mind telling you that my friends and I are going to put up all the money we can rake together on Wimbledon to win, and we'll see that you get a good slice of all the cash that we pull in. To show you that I'm not bluffing—" here he pulled a roll of bills from his pocket and took off several—"here's twenty-five dollars on account. That's only a fraction of what you'll get, if you put this thing through."

He laid the bills on Bill Sykes's lap. It was a strong temptation to a boy who was compelled to count every cent he spent. Bill succumbed, after several minutes' hesitation, compromising with his conscience by telling himself that, after all, he was helping his school. Sandy grinned evilly in the semi-darkness.

Then followed a discussion on ways and means. Bill thought he could get two or three of his team to help him utilize the signals, simply telling them that he had happened accidentally to learn them and that it would be no harm to use them for Wimbledon's advantage.

So it was a hilarious group of plotters that,

after putting Bill Sykes down at his home, rode back to Lenox.

"Trust little Sandy!" gloated that young fellow, as he bade his pals good-night. "When he starts a thing, he finishes it."

In the meantime, Garry and his team, blissfully unconscious of the danger threatening them and confident that they had spiked the enemy's guns by the change of signals, were working incessantly at practice. And work it was, for the old signals would keep constantly obtruding themselves into the new.

For a few days there was endless confusion, but gradually the kinks were straightened out, and by the end of the week the new system was working fairly well. Still, there was much apprehension in Garry's mind as to what might happen in the heat of the actual game that was now only a short time away. Also, his rage at the rascals whose actions had made all this change necessary rose at times to a white heat.

The day before the game with Wimbledon was to take place Garry was stopped on the street by a boy whose face seemed familiar, but whom he could not place at the moment.

"You're Garry Grayson, aren't you?" the boy asked.

"Yes," replied Garry. "And you—oh, I know now who you are! You're Joe Brench, quarterback of the Wimbledon team. I played

against you last year. Friendly enemies?" he added, with a grin.

"Yes," replied Joe, with an answering smile. "And I suppose we'll play against each other again to-morrow. It was that, in fact, I came over to see you about."

"Is that so?" asked Garry guardedly. "What's up? Going to call the game off or anything?"

"No, not that," replied Joe. "It was—it was—Oh, I hardly know how to begin. Look here, Grayson!" He braced and spoke decidedly. "I want Wimbledon to beat the life out of Lenox to-morrow. But I want it to be done fairly and squarely—on the level. I—"

"Look out!" yelled Garry.

Down the hill at the foot of which the boys were standing came plunging a runaway automobile. The boys had been so engrossed in their talk that they did not notice it until it was nearly upon them.

Joe Brench was standing squarely in its path. Like a flash Garry grabbed him and pulled him partly out of the way. Not far enough, however, for the car struck Joe's legs and threw him violently to the ground.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### Almost a Tragedy

The shock of the blow from the runaway car was so great that Joe Brench was rendered unconscious. If Garry had not acted as swiftly as he had, there was little doubt that the boy would have been instantly killed.

A crowd was already following the car, and in response to Garry's shouts others came running from all directions. Some one called up the hospital, and in a few minutes an ambulance came tearing up.

The surgeon knelt down and examined the injured boy, whose head Garry was holding on his knee.

"Leg broken and a bad gash in the head, received when he fell," he announced after a moment. "Don't think the skull is fractured though. Can't tell yet whether he has any internal injuries. We'll get him to the hospital at once."

He administered what immediate aid was necessary, and then, with the help of the bystanders, got the boy into the ambulance and was off.

The car in its wild gyrations had come up against a tree, and now lay in the street, almost a wreck.

"Whose car is it?" asked one of the crowd.

"It's Sandy Podder's," answered a small boy who had seen the car start on its wild journey and now came up breathless. "He left it in front of Bagley's store at the top of the hill while he went inside."

"H'm! I'd rather it was his car than mine that hit that boy," remarked a bystander. "He'll have a pretty penny to pay for damages."

"Damages, nothing!" snarled Sandy himself, who at that moment arrived, wild-eyed and pale from his run down the hill. "Some boys must have started the car. Could I help that? You're talking through your hat."

But this was contradicted a minute later when the storekeeper himself came running up. He had seen the whole affair from start to finish.

"Young Podder can say what he likes," the storekeeper said to a group that gathered about him. "No boy touched the car. It began to move before Sandy got ten feet away from it. It was standing on an incline, and it must have been that he hadn't set his brakes right. It's lucky Mr. Podder is rich. He'll have to shell

out something before he gets quit of this business."

The accident had been a great shock to Garry. One moment he had been talking to Joe, who was as vital and vigorous as himself. The next moment that boy had been stricken down—fatally, for all Garry knew. Garry's head was swimming and his nerves were in a jangle. But he had saved Joe from instant death, anyway. For that he was profoundly thankful.

As Garry gradually acquired control of himself his thought recurred to what Joe had been saying when the accident happened. What had the boy meant when he spoke of his wanting to beat Lenox, but do it "fairly and squarely—on the level"?

Had he learned that some of the Wimbledon team had the Lenox signals and had he revolted at the thought and determined that Lenox should have a fair chance to win or lose on the merits of the game it played? Was that the explanation of his queer errand?

Garry's heart warmed toward the boy. He was square, at any rate, an honest foe. Of course, thought Garry to himself, Wimbledon, if it had any of the Lenox signals at all, had only the old ones that had now been discarded. Joe's errand, however well intentioned, had been needless. There was nothing to worry

about as far as the signals were concerned. How lucky it was that Mr. Phillips had changed the old ones for the new! And how disconcerted the conspirators would be when they found that all their trickery had availed nothing!

In the evening Garry called up the hospital and inquired about Joe Brench. He was infinitely relieved when he learned that the injuries, though serious, were not fatal. The broken leg was the principal damage. There appeared to be no internal injuries. The boy had been delirious for a time, but was now resting quietly. Yes, Garry could probably see him for a few minutes the next morning. But he must not stay long and must not say anything to excite him.

So about eight o'clock the next morning Garry called at the hospital and was led by a nurse to the bed on which Joe Brench lay.

The sick boy smiled up at Garry gratefully as the latter sat down in a chair at the side of the bed.

"You're a bully scout," he murmured. "They tell me if you hadn't snatched me out of the way as quickly as you did, I'd have been killed, sure."

"I wish I'd been able, Joe, to pull you out of the way altogether," replied Garry. "But you'll be all right now, they tell me here. It's

only a matter of patience till your leg mends."

"Remember what I was saying to you when the car came along?" asked Joe.

"Oh, something about the game between Wimbledon and Lenox," replied Garry lightly. "But let that go now. You can tell me some other time."

"But some other time will be too late," replied Joe. "I want that game to be an honest one. And it won't be as it stands now."

"Why not?" asked Garry.

"Because," said Joe, "Wimbledon has got your signals. Two or three of the fellows are going to profit by them. They tried to get me to go in with them, but I put them off. But the more I thought of it the crookeder it seemed, and I couldn't stand for it. I want Wimbledon to win, but win honestly. I hate dirty football."

"So do I," replied Garry. "Now, Brench," he added, with a smile, "let me tell you something. Those signals that Wimbledon has are old ones. They're no good. We've thrown them into the junk heap and have taken up a complete new system. So we shan't worry. It's the crooks that will get left."

"No, no!" exclaimed Joe. "You're all wrong! They've got the new ones!"

"What?" cried Garry, hardly able to believe his ears. "They can't have! It's impossible!"

"Sure as shooting!" affirmed Joe. "Listen! I heard Bill Sykes telling one of the fellows about it. Those fellows who did this dirty work did intend to give away the old signals, but they got a tip that they were suspected. They guessed you'd call in the old ones and get new ones. So two of them hid in a closet in the gymnasium the day your coach went over the new signals, and they heard every word he said. They copied the new signals and—wait! What's your hurry?"

But Garry had already bolted from the room and was going down the stairs four steps at a time.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### Startling News

Garry Grayson's head was in a whirl as he ran along. Surprise was one element in his perturbation. Anger at the scoundrelism that dogged his steps was another. Chagrin was there, too, at the narrow escape from being outwitted by the conspirators.

He and his mates had been chuckling about the way Wimbledon would be flabbergasted when it tried to use the stolen signals, only to find that they were not being employed by Lenox at all. Now the laugh was on Lenox. It would have run its head right into the trap and gone down to certain defeat had it not been for Joe Brench's scorn of underhand methods.

As fast as his legs could carry him, Garry ran for Mr. Phillips's house. Luckily the coach was at home, and Garry was ushered into his study. Mr. Phillips looked up in surprise and some alarm as the boy came in, flushed and breathless.

"What's up, Grayson?" he asked quickly.

"Enough," answered Garry, as he took the chair Mr. Phillips indicated. "Wimbledon has

our signals—the new ones—and is planning to use them this afternoon!"

Mr. Phillips was shaken out of his usual calm.

"What?" he exclaimed. "Are you sure? Don't you mean the old ones?"

"No, the new ones," repeated Garry. "The ones we've been practicing on the last two weeks. There's no mistake, Mr. Phillips. I got it straight only a few minutes ago."

He then narrated his interview with Joe Brench. The coach listened intently, putting in a question here and there.

"Of all the undiluted rascality!" he exclaimed, rising and pacing the floor. "Who would have believed that those fellows would go as far as that? It seems incredible. Why didn't I have the gymnasium searched before I gave you the new set of signals?

"Oh, well," he went on, "what's done is done. We're lucky, anyway, to get the tip even at this late hour. Now let me think."

He bowed his head on his hands for a few minutes while Garry watched him anxiously.

"There's just one thing to do," pronounced Mr. Phillips at last. "We'll go back to the old signals."

Garry started.

"I suppose that is the only thing to do," he assented dubiously. "But of course we've been

trying to forget those for the last two weeks, and we've got no time now to practice the old ones again. I'm afraid the fellows will get all mixed up."

"I'm afraid so too," admitted Mr. Phillips. "But it's the only thing left for us to do. It would be suicide to use the new ones that Wimbledon knows. And we've got to remember that if our boys get confused, Wimbledon, too, is apt to get rattled when she finds we're not using the signals to which she's been tipped off. So maybe it will be a standoff. At any rate, it's our only chance.

"Now just one thing more, Grayson. Don't say a word about this to any of the team. They might let it leak out inadvertently. I'll give them their instructions just before they go out on the field. And don't get too discouraged over the outlook. True, the boys have been practicing the new signals for the last two weeks. But, remember, they've been familiar with the old ones for two years, and the force of old habit will assert itself, if they set themselves earnestly to the work."

Garry drew what comfort he could from this and hurried home to get a light lunch before he repaired to the field for the decisive struggle of the season. He was glad, anyway, that the game was to take place on the Lenox grounds.

That ought to count for something in the home team's favor.

Whatever apprehension he felt, he concealed under a bright exterior, and to all appearances was his usual confident, aggressive self as he chatted with his comrades in the gymnasium. Also, he had searched every closet before Mr. Phillips appeared on the scene.

"All ready to whip Wimbledon, boys?" asked the coach cheerily.

A roar of assent rang through the gymnasium. The boys were in high feather, and showed it.

"Good!" said Mr. Phillips. "Go in and wipe up the earth with them. You're trained to the minute. I've never seen you in better form."

He paused for a moment.

"I'm going to say a thing that may surprise you," he went on, "but you must believe that I know what I'm doing and that it's for the best. We'll use the old signals in this game."

There was a gasp of surprise that had in it a suggestion of panic. The players looked at each other in amazement.

"Steady, boys," counseled the coach. "You heard me. Put the new signals out of your mind. Build up a blank wall between your mind and them. You can do it! After all, the old ones are far more familiar. They'll come

back to you instinctively. Do as I say and you'll win. Out with you now on the field!"

"Come along, fellows!" called Garry, and trotted out, followed by his more or less dazed comrades.

For ten minutes they practiced falling on the ball and running through the old signals. Then, as the moment for the game approached, Garry gathered his boys together and indicated a certain point in the crowded stands.

Their eyes followed his and rested on Sandy, Lent, Aleck Anderson, and Ed Bixby. The quartet was in a hilarious mood.

"See those fellows?" cried Garry. "They've bet on Wimbledon. They're rooting for us to lose. Are you going to let them gloat over us?"

"No!"

Garry could have made no more timely appeal to the fighting spirit of his team.

"All right, then," commanded their captain grimly. "Go in and wipe that smirk off their faces!"

## CHAPTER XXV

### Going over the Top

A tremendous crowd was present, one larger than had attended any of the league games that season. It looked as if all Wimbledon had come over to cheer on its team. And the Lenox stands were crowded with enthusiastic students and people of the town, the bright dresses of the girls adding a pretty splash of color.

Before the stands the rival cheer leaders danced up and down like so many acrobats. A brass band played sprightly airs, that were, however, often drowned by the discord of cowbells, with which both sides were liberally equipped. The crowd was out for fun and excitement, and it got it within the first ten seconds of play.

Wimbledon won the toss and elected to kick off. Sykes sent the ball whirling down the field. Garry leaped high into the air and collared the ball. Then, like a streak of lightning, he tore down the field, squirming, dodging and twisting, and before the astounded spectators could guess what had happened he had landed

the ball behind the line for a touchdown.

It was the most scintillating play that had occurred on the league grounds that season. The crowd gaped in astonishment. Then Lenox woke up and promptly went insane. Cowbells jangled, caps were tossed into the air, and the air was rent with shouts, in which the girls mingled their shrill treble.

"Grayson! Grayson! Grayson!"

"Did you ever see such running?"

"No jack-rabbit has anything on him!"

"And that's my brother," murmured Ella happily to Jane Danter.

Half the beauty of the play lay in its unexpectedness. The ordinary thing would have been to run the ball back as many yards as possible before being downed. But Garry had glimpsed an opening, and, with him, to see was to act.

Nick kicked the goal, and seven points were chalked up to the credit of Lenox.

But Wimbledon, though flustered for a moment, soon got back its nerve.

"Let 'em crow!" growled Sykes to Farnum, the right half, and Chambers, the left half, who were in with him on the secret of the stolen signals. "It won't be long before we have them standing on their heads."

Wimbledon got the ball on the kick-off and

lined up for the scrimmage. Farnum tore through right end and tackle for three yards. A plunge by Sykes netted two more on the left. Chambers made two more between guard and center, but when he tried to repeat was thrown back by Walker for a loss, and the ball went to Lenox on downs.

Big Bill Sherwood lowered his head and plunged through for five yards. Nick took the ball next and made three. On the next play Garry himself tore through for four, making their distance with a down to spare.

If Wimbledon was especially strong anywhere, it was in the line, where they had more beef than Lenox. The ease with which the distance had been made was a surprise to the Wimbledon rooters, who shouted hoarse demands for their line to brace. It was a surprise too to Sykes and his confederates.

But it was no surprise to Garry Grayson, who chuckled in his sleeve. The signals he had called had been misinterpreted by the fellows who were in the secret on the other side. Where they had looked for an attack through the left, it had been made on the right, and vice versa. Consequently, the Wimbledon players massed where it would do no good, and left their line thin at the real point of attack.

But the visitors braced savagely on the next play, and for a time held their own. Nick and

Rooster pierced the line for small gains only, and Knapp was forced to punt. He boomed the ball away to Ford, the Wimbledon quarterback. He caught the ball on his ten-yard line, but succeeded in running it back only three yards before he was downed hard by Bill Sherwood.

On Wimbledon's first play there was a fumble, and Chambers fell on the ball on his own three-yard line. From behind his goal line he tried to throw a forward pass to Chambers, but it was intercepted by Tom Allison, who was forced out of bounds on Wimbledon's twenty-five-yard line.

Sherwood jammed his way through the line for three yards. Nick tried to bore through between right end and tackle, but was thrown for the loss of a yard. Knapp made but two on the left of the line.

With fourth down and six yards to go, Garry signaled that he himself would carry the next ball. On the new system that Wimbledon was relying on, that signal stood for a forward pass. The Wimbledon backs fell back in consequence to kill the play. But Garry snatched the ball the instant it was passed back to him, tucked it under his arm, and was off like a rocket around right end. He straight-armed two tacklers and sped to the Wimbledon three-yard line before he was downed while the

stands shook with the cheers of the Lenox rooters.

With their goal line threatened, the visitors' line stiffened and held Knapp in his tracks on the first down. Rooster, however, made two. And then, with one mad plunge, Bill Sherwood bored through for the second touchdown of the game. Nick missed the point for goal and the score stood 13 to 0 in favor of Lenox.

From the stands went up a booming chant:

"Lenox! Lenox! Len, Len, Len!
Put the skids under Wimbledon.
Show those ginks that you weigh a ton.
Lenox! Lenox! Len, Len, Len!"

In the two minutes of play that remained no more scoring was done by either side, and the ball was in midfield when the period ended.

"I guess we're bad, eh?" grinned Rooster to Garry, as the warriors of both sides lay sprawled on the ground for the brief rest between periods.

"Their fellows seem to be badly rattled," remarked Nick, in a puzzled way.

"Haven't you fellows tumbled yet?" chuckled Garry.

"Tumbled to what?" asked Bill.

"I guess I'll leave that to Mr. Phillips to tell you," grinned Garry. "All I'm saying

now is that we're having a nice little demonstration that honesty is the best policy. But come along, fellows. Time's up!"

Wimbledon had the ball, but when it failed to gain after two line smashes Chambers punted to the Lenox thirty-five-yard line.

Nick cut loose on a run of fifteen yards around Wimbledon's left wing. Here again the signals in Wimbledon's possession wrought confusion, for they called for a run to the right and the Wimbledon line had swung round to head him off. Knapp was thrown for a loss on the next play, and then on a deceptive right end rush, Garry squirmed through the line for ten yards. Rooster punted over the Wimbledon goal line and the ball was brought back. Wimbledon failed to penetrate the Lenox line and Sykes resorted again to the kicking game.

It was Lenox's ball on Wimbledon's thirty-eight-yard line, and twice Garry, who was fighting like a tiger, jammed his way through for two first downs. The Lenox backs kept up a persistent attack until Nick planted the ball on the visitors' ten-yard line.

After Tom Allison had made a brilliant attempt to skirt the enemy's right end, he was forced out of bounds on Wimbledon's three-yard line. On the next play Rooster, on a fake to jump the left end, suddenly whirled and threw himself between guard and tackle for a

touchdown. Nick kicked the goal and the score was 20 to 0 in favor of the home team!

Amid the playing of the band, the jangle of cowbells and the frenzied shoutings of the Lenox rooters, four very pale and dispirited conspirators looked at each other with panic in their eyes.

Sandy, his complexion a yellowish green, hid his head in his hands and groaned miserably.

"Nice thing you've let us in for!" gritted Lent Stewart savagely.

"We're done, and done brown!" growled Aleck Anderson.

"And I've put every cent I had on Wimbledon," snarled the glowering Bixby.

"Aw, shut up!" Sandy came back at his baiters. "I'll lose more money than all the rest of you put together, if Wimbledon loses. I'll be stony broke and in debt too, for I've borrowed from everybody. Can I help it if Sykes isn't taking advantage of the signals I gave him? What's the matter with the fellow, anyway? He's had a dead cinch, if he only had played it right."

"It's Lenox that had the cinch," snarled Aleck Anderson. "I've been watching the play, and I know. Lenox has got next to your scheme and has gone back to its old signals. You've been double-crossed, you big boob! Wimbledon's up in the air. You and your

smart schemes! Why, Garry Grayson's got more brains in his little finger than you have in your head, you false alarm!"

After Wimbledon had kicked off and Lenox had failed to make its distance in the first three downs, Rooster was forced to kick and the ball was Wimbledon's in midfield. Ford and Chambers got away a pretty forward pass, and it looked as though the visitors might accomplish something with their overhead attack. But the Lenox defense was too agile and smart. After Garry had dashed around the right end of the visitors for a twenty-yard gain, Nick hurled a ten-yard forward pass to Knapp, who shot headlong through the Wimbledon line for an eight-yard gain and brought the ball to the enemy's ten-yard line. Sherwood gained three yards. Nick made a bold attempt to get round the end for a score, but was forced out of bounds. Then Lenox made a bluff line play, and Tom Allison tossed a pretty forward pass to Garry, who was behind the line waiting for the ball, and Garry shot through for another touchdown. Bill kicked the goal while the Lenox stands went crazy.

Stung to desperation, Wimbledon made a stiff defense after that, and the period ended with the score 27 to 0 in favor of the home team!

While his team had been piling up points

Mr. Phillips had been coming to a decision. He had watched every play with the eyes of a hawk.

He had hoped that on reconsideration Wimbledon, or those of the team who had been let into the secret of the Lenox signals, would finally decide to throw them into the discard and play straight, honest football. But as the game progressed he noted that they were depending upon their illegitimate knowledge, or supposed knowledge. He could tell by the way the Wimbledon men swayed to the right or the left at given signals and by the confusion that resulted when the expected play had not come off that they were using the code that Sandy had slipped to them.

That they should suffer from their unsportsmanlike conduct was perfectly proper. Lenox was playing straight football. If Wimbledon tried crooked work and slipped up in the attempt, she was only getting what was coming to her.

But Wimbledon! Ah, there was the rub! The school was not crooked. The coach was not crooked. Probably only two or three of the team had been taken into the secret. The rest of the boys were probably playing honest ball. It seemed too bad that they should all suffer from the dishonest scheme of a few.

So at the first opportunity he had—the fif-

teen minutes' rest between halves—Mr. Phillips decided on an unusual but a generous thing.

He sought out Adams, the Wimbledon coach, an old acquaintance with whom he was on the friendliest terms.

"Hello, Phillips!" Adams greeted him, summoning up a wry smile. "Your boys are certainly putting it all over us to-day. Have you come to gloat over me?"

"Nothing like that, Adams," said Mr. Phillips, with an answering smile as he grasped the other's extended hand. "Simply to give you a tip. You're a mighty good football man. Haven't you noticed something queer about the playing of some of your boys?"

"Yes, I have," replied Adams soberly. "I've been trying to figure it out. The linesmen have been all right, but the backs have played like simpletons. I can't understand it. Usually, they've been my most dependable men."

"And probably would have been to-day," replied Mr. Phillips, "if they'd been playing straight football."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Coach Adams quickly, a frown beginning to gather.

"Now don't go up in the air, Adams," Mr. Phillips adjured him. "I'm risking a sure victory in telling you this. If I kept still, we'd probably beat you by fifty to none. But I want

to keep the game clean. Now here's the story," and in a few brief sentences he told the tale of the stealing of the signals by Sandy Podder's gang. As Mr. Adams listened the frown upon his brow became a thunder cloud.

"It's certainly kind of you to tell me this," he said warmly, when Mr. Phillips had finished. "And you can bet there's going to be a shakeup in my team!" he added.

He hurried off, and when, a few minutes later, the teams lined up again, Sykes, Chambers, and Farnum were missing.

Now the Lenox boys found that they had their hands full. Whether the Wimbledon coach had told his players of the dereliction of their mates or had simply left them to their own suspicions, was not known by Mr. Phillips; but in any event the Wimbledons had been roused to a pitch of ferocity that for a few minutes took the players on the home team off their feet.

Wimbledon's first play when they got the ball resulted in a twenty-five-yard gain by Reulbach around the Lenox left end. One forward pass failed, but another, Gray to Weston, gave Wimbledon a net gain of forty yards, bringing the ball to the Lenox eight-yard line. Booth smashed through for five yards. Briggs was halted in his tracks. But on the next try, Weston plunged through for Wimbledon's first

touchdown of the game. Reulbach kicked the goal, and Wimbledon had escaped a whitewash.

But it was soon evident that they were not going to be satisfied with that. Encouraged by the howls of their rooters—the first there had been any occasion for so far—the Wimbledons played like wild men. Three times in succession they made their distance by line smashing. Then Acland snatched a forward pass out of the air and by a magnificent run around right end crossed the line for another touchdown. The try for point succeeded, and Wimbledon now had fourteen points.

Lenox had been resting too securely on its laurels. Its easy time in the first half had inspired it with overconfidence. Now it began to wake up and play the ball of which it was capable. The Lenox line, stung by Garry's furious charge that it was as full of holes as Swiss cheese, became a stone wall against which the Wimbledon cohorts broke in vain.

But misfortunes—as viewed by Lenox—never come singly, for just as the Wimbledon flood had seemed to be stayed a break of the game came to their aid. Lenox had begun a march down the field that threatened to bring them within striking distance of the hostile goal. They had reached the twenty-yard line when McCarty fumbled, and Reulbach, pouncing on the ball like a hawk, sped like a meteor

down the field with all the Lenox team pounding at his heels and went over the line for another touchdown, the third for Wimbledon in that period.

The scoring for the quarter ended then and there, and until the referee's whistle blew the lines swayed back and forth nearly in midfield.

It had been a notable comeback for Wimbledon, which was now only six points behind. It was their rooters' turn to howl, and they made the most of it:

"Wimbledon! Wimbledon!
You've got Lenox on the run.
Keep it up, it's lots of fun.
Wimbledon! Wimbledon!"

Sweet music for the visiting team, but rank discord to Garry Grayson and his mates.

"They'll be singing to a different tune before the game's over," predicted Garry. "Wake up, fellows! Tear into 'em! Rip 'em up the back!"

Wimbledon made frantic efforts to get an overhead attack going through the fourth period. Ford and Weston formed one combination which tried in vain, and Acland and Reulbach made another. But the alert Lenox ends and secondary defense were usually out-

guessing the Wimbledons in the efforts to execute their forward passes.

Finding themselves thwarted, the Wimbledon boys resorted to line smashing tactics. But there was no Swiss cheese element now in the Lenox line. Holes were few and far between, and the contest grew so hard and furious that both sides were penalized for roughing. It was a ding-dong fight that set the crowd delirious.

Five minutes had passed with the elevens pushing each other back and forth, each resorting to the punt when rushes and forward passes were smeared, when suddenly a Lenox pass was intercepted by Booth, the big left tackle of the Wimbledons, who leaped high into the air, gathered the ball under his arm, and with a clear field before him ran thirty-two yards to a touchdown. Reulbach kicked the goal, and for the first time in the game Wimbledon was ahead. She had twenty-eight points to Lenox's twenty-seven. Only one point, but with the last quarter nearing its close that one point loomed up like the Rock of Gibraltar.

The noise now was deafening. All semblance of sanity had disappeared from the Wimbledon section. The Lenox stands were wrapped in a pall of gloom. All sat glum and silent.

But if Garry was whipped, the news had not yet reached him. His blood was at fighting

pitch. He was like a wildcat. He tore through the enemy's line like a battering ram. Most of the time he carried the ball himself. Once he plunged through for eleven yards, pulling most of the Wimbledon team along with him till he was down. Another time he netted thirteen. Lenox had got within eighteen yards of Wimbledon's goal line when a fumble by Knapp gave the ball to Wimbledon. Reulbach punted out of danger and the work was all to be done over again.

And now only four minutes of time was left! Each passing second seemed to tick the doom of Lenox. It was Wimbledon's ball in midfield. Twice Wimbledon tried to gain through the line and was thrown back for losses.

Then Reulbach punted. Bill Sherwood broke through and blocked the kick. Garry, who was at his side, clutched the rolling pigskin as it bounded slightly upward and was off down the field.

On he raced, with Rooster and Nick at his side to block off would-be tacklers. On and on with the goal beckoning him. Booth plunged toward him, but Garry straight-armed him, while Rooster by a superb rolling block disposed of Reulbach and Nick went into Weston like a load of brick. On and on, slipping like a ghost through all who tried to stop him, raced Garry Grayson, and, summoning his strength

in one last effort, threw himself over the Wimbledon line for a touchdown!

Pandemonium broke loose in the Lenox stands. Yells went up in thunderous volume. People hugged each other and babbled incoherently. Ella threw herself into Jane's arms and sobbed happily. Jane herself was sniveling.

And four rascals sat silent with pallor on their faces and rage in their hearts as the chant arose:

"Lenox! Lenox! Len, Len, Len!
Look at her most noble son!
See Garry Grayson run!
Lenox! Lenox! Len, Len, Len!"

Rooster kicked the goal and Lenox had 34 points to Wimbledon's 28, and a moment later the referee's whistle ended the game.

Once more Lenox had won the championship of the High School League. Garry was deliriously happy. He had upheld the honor of Lenox High. That was the most important thing. Secondary was the thought that he had thwarted the enemies who sought to overthrow him. They were down and out—for the present, at least.

Would they stay down? That question is answered in the next book of this series, en-

titled: "Garry Grayson Showing His Speed; or, A Daring Run on the Gridiron."

There was a great celebration of the victory in Lenox that night, bonfires, speeches, snake dancing, with Garry Grayson as the central figure. Cal Yates was there, as snappy and debonair as ever, and with him was his father, who had now almost completely recovered. Both were warm in their congratulations. Sandy Podder, Lent Stewart, Aleck Anderson, and Bixby were conspicuous by their absence.

The next day Garry called on Joe Brench at the hospital and was glad to learn that his leg was mending nicely and that he would soon be about again.

"It was a great thing you did for me that day, Garry," said Joe gratefully.

"It was a great thing you did for Lenox High that day," replied Garry, grinning happily.

THE END

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